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P J Moran
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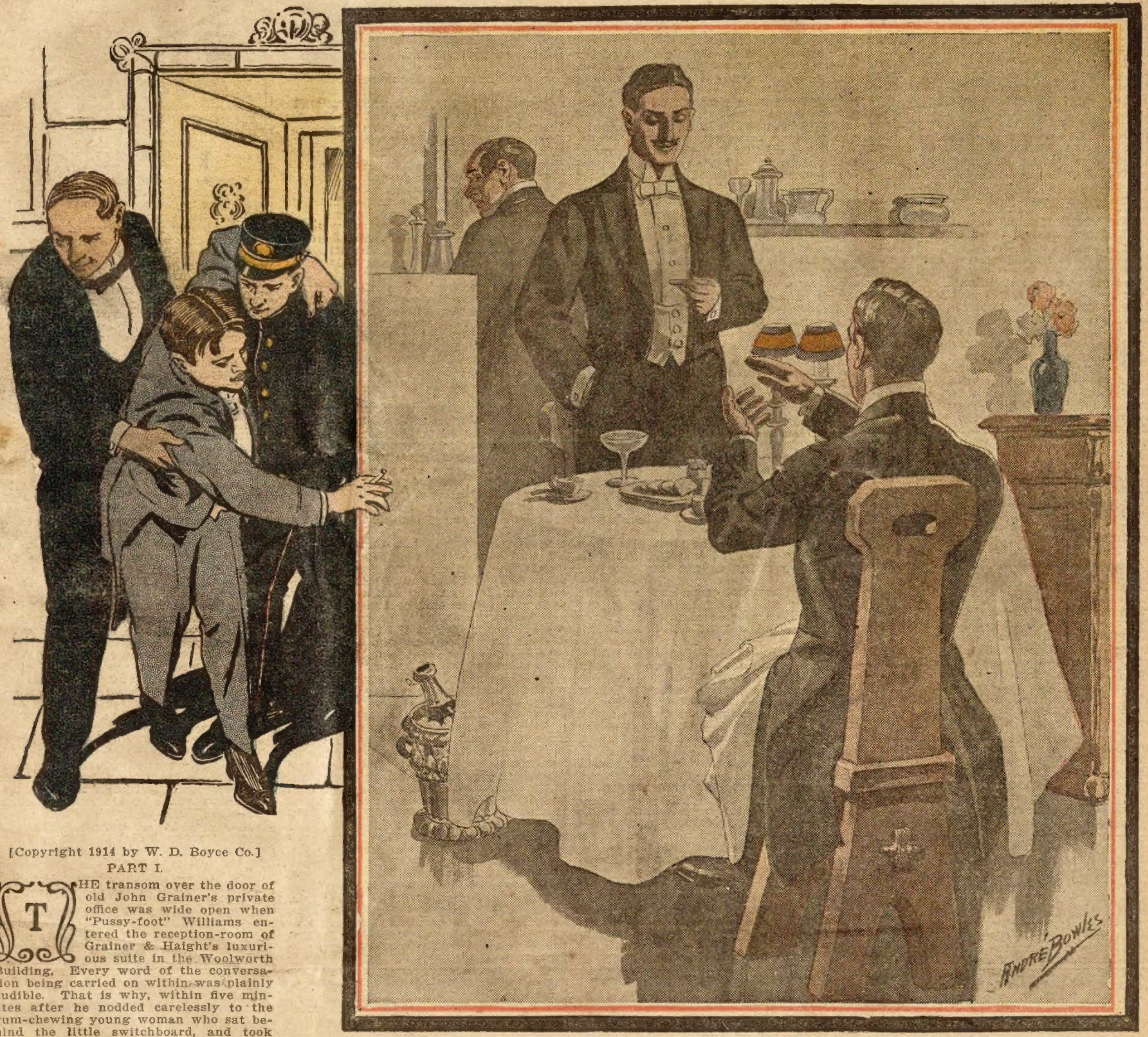
Hold-Up Versus Hold-Out

Or, THE EYES OF LOVE

By John Leisk Tait



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PART I.

THE transom over the door of old John Grainer's private office was wide open when "Pussy-foot" Williams entered the reception-room of Grainer & Haight's luxurious suite in the Woolworth Building. Every word of the conversation being carried on within was plainly audible. That is why, within five minutes after he nodded carelessly to the gum-chewing young woman who sat behind the little switchboard, and took his seat to wait the leisure of the head of the firm, Mr. Williams gathered himself together with the catlike intentness which had gained him his nickname, and pattered softly out of the room and down two flights of stairs to the public telephone on the thirty-fourth floor.

He paid particular attention to closing the door of his booth, and glanced furtively at the operator before answering the gruff "Well, hello!" elicited by his call. Convinced that the operator was indifferent, he put his mouth close to the phone and called tensely:

"Hello! is this Ballard, Larrimore & Swayne?"

Assured that it was, and that the party at the other end of the line was Mr. Larrimore himself, he went on rapidly:

"This is Williams. Understand? I've just come from Grainer & Haight's. Morrison's there now, having a heart-to-heart talk with old man Grainer. I happened to overhear some of it, and beat it straight here to put you wise.

"I overheard Morrison say that he must have their two hundred shares of Accolade stock to vote Friday noon, or he couldn't put that Eagle Creek combination through. No, he didn't get Bassett's stock; the old man flew the track at the last minute. Even with Grainer & Haight's two hundred he'll have a bare majority of fifty shares. Now listen!

"He's so careful about it that he's got old Grainer to give him the certificates—got 'em on him this minute! Yes, I overheard him promising to take special care of them, and old Grainer telling him he'd better write out a receipt. Sure thing!

"Now listen!"

Once more "Pussy-foot" glanced over his shoulder at the operator; but that young woman was intently regarding herself in a hand mirror held at various angles and distances, and in no wise interested in what was passing over the phone. Reassured, he resumed:

"I heard Morrison say he's going to take dinner at the Tremont, and is going to spend the night at Bill Fletcher's country place, where he'll deliver the stock to Fletcher in person. Fletcher is to get a proxy entitling him to vote it. Understand?

"Now get me! We've got to get that stock before it gets into Bill Fletcher's hands. What? Well, that's what I'm telling you now. You do like I say, and I'll get the certificates all right. Listen!

"You know Jimmie Ballard's just

turned over a new leaf, and is trying to make good with the old man after getting helped out of that yachting muddle at Palm Beach. Well, you get the old man to work Jimmie in on this deal. What? Yes, he can, too—if you'll work it like I say!

"You tell him to get Jimmie to beat it down to the Tremont and bump into Morrison, friendly like, and get him soused. No, it won't hurt him a bit. I don't want violence any more'n you do. That isn't the game. What? Well, you don't want those certificates delivered to Bill Fletcher, do you? Then you'd better do as I suggest. You never mind about that; that's my part. No, I tell you I don't mean to harm him. All right—good-by!"

"Pussy-foot" slipped guiltily out of the booth and made his way farther down town to a certain cab-stand, where he transacted certain other business in a characteristically furtive manner. It is enough to state that in the course of it a twenty-dollar bill found its way into the vest pocket of Smoky Pete, a beady-eyed cab driver, and that when "Pussy-foot" Williams took his way up town once more his face was wreathed in the grimly triumphant smile which he was accustomed to wear in the consciousness of duty well performed.

Meantime young Jimmie Ballard had been closeted with his father, in consequence of a suggestion dropped by Mr. Larrimore. The conference was not altogether a pleasant one for the young man, who, if he was given to rather more frivolity than the average millionaire's son, was at least clean in purpose and in practice

"I can't do it, Dad!" he objected when his father had stated his wishes with characteristic directness.

"The devil you can't!" exploded Ballard, pere. "I thought you had made up your mind to give some of your time to business, meant to try to be a factor in this firm. And now, the very first time I ask your help in anything that is important, you find yourself too fine-haired to come across. You make me tired!"

"But this isn't legitimate business; it's——"

"Son," said the old man with sudden softness, "you're all right at heart; you simply don't know the ropes. In business—at least in business as big as this business is—all the tricks of diplomacy and then some are legitimate. There is no more powerful factor in the handling of such deals as this than the social element, rightly used. And you, my boy, can be particularly valuable to us if you will make use of your connections and accomplishments in that way.

"Morrison has information that we must get if we are going to defeat this Eagle Creek combination; and it means ruin to our copper interests if we don't. I'll answer for his personal safety, and there's no other way to get what we want—the time's too short. Are you going to help, or are you going to stand off and twiddle your thumbs because you're too nice to do a man's work? What about you?"

For an instant Jimmie Ballard hesitated; then, reaching for his hat, he stood up with a sudden straightening of the shoulders.

"I'll do it, Dad," he said. "I guess you're right about business demanding things that seem rather obnoxious I don't like this job a bit; but—I'll do it."

Ten minutes later he ran into Joe Morrison at the door of the Tremont Hotel, and stretched out his hand with an exclamation of pleasure.

"By Jove! Morrison, I'm glad to meet you, old man. I came in here to dine; but it looks so beastly lonesome that I gave it up. I'm just starting for the club. Come on; dine with me, there's a good fellow! You'll save me from a fit of the blues. I'm all out of sorts today."

As he spoke he thrust his arm through Morison's, and whirled him about. Morrison uttered a protest, but Jimmie drowned it out laughingly and, fairly pulling him into a taxicab, ordered the driver to take them to one of the most exclusive clubs in the city.

That dinner was one that Joseph Morrison never forgot It was flawless. The service, the menu, the flow of wit and anecdote, that fell from the lips of his host—all were unimpeachable.

It was, moreover, a new experience for him. He had come to the city three years before from the Middle West. He had brought with him a mining engineer's diploma and three years' experience as salesman with a real-estate firm in his home town. Aside from that, and an unbounded ambition to succeed, he had brought little else. He had declined to take a position with an established firm, but hired a little office in an obscure building, and began studying "the game" from his own angle. He had put over several minor deals, and finally found his dreams of success in a fair way to be realized. He began to reap commissions that enabled him to launch bigger schemes, and to live in a style that made their success possible. He was hanging tentatively upon the fringes of the social world, in fact, when he undertook the task of financing a combination of four of the largest copper mines on Eagle Creek—a scheme whose success would make him a millionaire at thirty-one.

It was about three months before this that he met Minnie Moss at a week-end house party in the Adirondacks. Joe Morrison had capitulated at sight, and his desire to be able to meet her upon an equal financial footing was, indeed, the chief factor in his present undertaking. He had been told that she was an heiress, and had enjoyed frequent invitations to country houses where she was also a guest. Joe Morrison did not guess that Miss Moss herself was primarily responsible for the majority of those invitations—nor had he ever before partaken of the hospitality of one of the gilded clubs.

Tonight he drank sparingly of the bubbling wine—or believed that he was doing so—but the room was radiant with light, and crystal service, and the sense of goodfellowship; and somehow he found himself vaguely dizzy and somnolent, and became conscious that Jimmie Ballard had gone and that two of the waiters were assisting him from a couch in the reading-room down to the cab that awaited at the club entrance. He remembered vaguely next morning that the cab-driver had helped his valet get him up the steps into his own rooms.

He awoke late next morning. His head felt as big as a bushel basket and every atom in it ached. He was conscious of a sense of self-reproach. He got up wearily and proceeded to take a hot bath.

As he was putting on his coat he was seized with a sudden apprehension concerning those stock certificates in the inside pocket. He should have gone out to Fletcher's last night, and delivered them to his host. To reassure himself, he thrust his hand into the inside pocket. They were not there!

Frantically he tried the pocket on the opposite side. The certificates were gone. The sweat beaded out upon his aching brow, and his fingers shook as he prolonged his search through all the pockets of his suit, finally taking his coat off in order to examine it more thoroughly. The search was vain.

He was wild by this time. He sought desperately through his rooms. He called his man, and questioned him. The valet had seen nothing that resembled a package of certificates. Morrison hastily completed dressing and took a cab to the club.

No, the waiter had found no papers after the gentleman left the night before. He remembered him perfectly—oh, perfectly. The well-trained menial did not even smile. Yes, he had helped the gentleman into his taxi, and returned immediately to clear away his tables. He was certain that no papers had been dropped upon the floor.

"The chauffeur's number? Oh, let me see, sir! It must have been 654—or it might have been 456, I'm not just certain. Oh, yes sir, it was one of the two, I'll be bound. But you'll know the man, sir, the moment you lay eyes on him. He was a big, red-headed Irishman, sir, and he had a crooked forefinger I remember that perfectly, sir, because I've a cousin with a crooked finger himself—got it handling a heavy cask, sir, when he was just a lad—only his crooked finger is not a forefinger at all, sir, but the third on the left hand; and this chauffeur's was on the right. Ah, thank you, sir!"

As he went down the clubhouse steps Joe Morrison bumped into Bill Fletcher. Big Bill jovially caught him by the shoulder.

"Hullo! Morrison, come back and take something with me. In a hurry, eh? Well, see you this evening. Looked for you last night out at the Cedars. So long!"

From the top step, he turned to call:

"Oh, I say, Morrison! Don't fail to send over those certificates of Grainer & Haight's today. Got to vote 'em Friday noon, you know—can't put over our combination without 'em. I'll be uneasy until I get my hands on them. Grainer told me he would send them over by you, you know."

Sick at heart, the young broker waved adieu to his jovial client, and hastened on up the street. He must find that chauffeur at any cost.

His search lasted for hours. Late in the afternoon he found No. 654. He was a mulatto.

Two hours later he chanced upon No. 456. He was a diminutive Italian. In desperation, Morrison interviewed him.

With much frantic gesticulation the man declared that he had taken no fare from the Battery Club the night before—none at all! He was quite sure. Completely outdone, Morrison started back to his rooms, which lay only about six blocks distant.

Presently he found himself caught in a jam. The street was blockaded with cabs and carriages, honking autos and swearing drivers vying with each other in making the vicinity uproarious. Policemen were shaking their clubs and ordering drivers and chauffeurs about.

His attention was attracted by the vociferous swearing of one particular chauffeur. The man was a huge, red-haired Irishman with a specially mellifluous brogue. Morrison suddenly started, and began leaping over obstructions to get beside him. The man had a crooked forefinger upon his right hand.

He swore terrifically as Morrison clambered up beside him, but was compelled to give his attention to the vehicles and plunging horses which threatened at every moment to smash his own conveyance. At length the blockade dissolved, and he steered out to the edge of the curbing. Then he turned upon his passenger menacingly.

"Now, thin, me bucko bhye, phwat'll yez be afther wantin', Oi dunno?"

"I want to know if you are the man who drove me from the Battery Club to my rooms in 84th street last night?"

The man looked him over shrewdly.

"Sure, thin, Oi did not. Oi raymimber seein' yez carried down the stheps about midnoight betune a couple o' waithers, an' put intil a cab dhrove be a Dutchman they call Smoky Pete. But where yez wint to Oi can't say at all, at all."

"Can you tell me where I might be able to find this Smoky Pete?"

"The gossoon used t' be dhrivin' fer th' Cassidy bhyes, down on Twenty-third sthrate, wist soide."

Morrison thanked him and asked to be driven to the Cassidy place. The proprietor of that establishment shook his head.

"Smoky Pete was discharged from this place six months ago," he declared. "I supposed he had left town."

Back into the streets went the frantic broker, armed with a description of Smoky Pete, and striving wildly to identify that slippery individual in every chauffeur he encountered. It was late that night before he returned, unsuccessful, to his rooms. Possibly he might be able, there, to think the matter out. His man met him at the door.

"Telephone's been ringing for you, sir, ever since one o'clock. No. 6977 Battery, sir. I promised to inform them the moment you came in. Important business they said, sir."

Morrison groaned. No. 6977 Battery was Fletcher's private office. He started to pick up the phone before removing his coat, but at that moment his doorbell rang and he turned to receive his caller.

It proved to be big Bill Fletcher himself. His face was flushed. He was manifestly worried, and plunged immediately into the business that had brought him.

"Where are those Grainer & Haight certificates, Morrison?" he demanded.

Morrison turned to his man.

"I'll ring if I want you, Benton," he said. He waved Fletcher to a seat.

"I'm glad you've come, Fletcher," he said miserably. "I can't tell where those damned certificates are; I've been hunting for them all day, myself."

Fletcher sprang to his feet with an imprecation.

The broker waved him imperiously to his seat once more, and began pouring out his story in a rapid fire of staccato sentences. His client listened open-mouthed. In the midst of the narration, they were interrupted by another ring.

It was "Pussy-foot" Williams. He cast a searching glance at the two; then addressed himself to Morrison.

"I beg your pardon for calling in this informal way, Mr. Morrison," he began deprecatingly. "I really meant to wait until morning, and then see you at your office; but my clients, Grainer & Haight, are making the devil of a row. They've got a notion somehow or other that those Accolade stock certificates they gave you to deliver to Mr. Fletcher have come to grief some way; and old man Grainer's raising the very devil about them. Mr. Fletcher told me about an hour ago that he hadn't received them—and you know the papers were delivered to you in Grainer & Haight's office about five o'clock yesterday afternoon. We supposed you'd take them over to Mr. Fletcher the first thing this morning—or by noon at the latest. I'm afraid you don't appreciate the importance of these certificates, Mr. Morrison. The whole Eagle Creek combination hangs on them. If they're not in Mr. Fletcher's hands to vote by tomorrow noon, the Ballard bunch headed by Ballard, Larrimore & Swayne will call the trick and clean our whole crowd off the boards. You can scarcely blame my clients for feeling a bit ruffled about it—under the circumstances, you know."

The harried Morrison threw up his hands.

"My God! Mr. Williams, I don't know where they are!"

"What!"

"They're lost—stolen off my person last night, I think—just after dinner. I was—er—I'd made a fool of myself and drank too much at dinner. The fact is, I haven't any clear recollection of what did actually take place, beyond the fact that I dined with Jimmie Ballard at the Battery Club. I went home in a cab, and when I got up this morning the papers were not in my clothes. I've searched my rooms, and searched the city over—but I can't find a trace of them."

The virtuous "Pussy-foot" arose and looked severely from Morrison to Fletcher and from Fletcher back to the distressed Morrison.

"And this is the way you account for the disappearance of nearly a quarter of a million dollars' worth of stock!" he said bitingly. "Really, Mr. Morrison, you must pardon me if I say that I cannot advise my clients to accept your story in lieu of the papers. You have until noon tomorrow to deliver them, of course; but I suppose it is unnecessary to tell you that your failure to do so at that time will cause your arrest upon a very ugly charge."

"Good God, Mr. Williams!" ejaculated Morrison whitely. "You surely don't think that I——"

"I simply don't permit myself to think of that phase of the matter at all," answered the attorney, frigidly crumpling his gloves in his hand. "I have merely stated the result of a contingency that I sincerely trust will not arise. I must bid you good evening, gentlemen. I have an engagement in half an hour."

He bowed and was gone before Morrison could recover himself. Fletcher was staring like one dazed. Morrison pulled himself together in a moment and caught up his own hat and gloves.

"Come on!" he said to Fletcher. "I'm going over to Grainer & Haight's, and I'd like to have you with me. They can't think seriously that I mean to steal their stock certificates, or intentionally prevent their getting into your hands to be voted tomorrow noon. Why it's absurd! My whole future depends upon that very thing being accomplished."

Fletcher interrupted him.

"I doubt whether you'll find either member of the firm there at this hour. I suggest, if you really want to see Mr. Grainer, that you call his residence. He lives on 145th street, you know. I don't recall his phone number, but you can find it in the directory."

Morrison acted upon this suggestion, and was very gruffly granted an audience by the senior member of the firm, provided he called within the hour. In a little less than that time he was pulling the big, old-fashioned doorbell at the Grainer mansion on 145th street.

The two were ushered into Mr. Grainer's private study. The old man was entrenched behind a massive mahogany table, upon which were piled stacks of formidable-looking documents, flanked by law books and bastioned by files. He glanced up from the document he was perusing, nodded curtly as they entered and invited his visitors to be seated.

"We have called, Mr. Grainer," began the young broker nervously, "because of a visit I had at my rooms this evening from your attorney, Mr. Williams. He intimated that you are greatly vexed because I have not yet delivered those two hundred shares of Accolade stock to Mr. Fletcher. I wished to assure you that I am quite as much distressed over it as you can possibly be, and that I am making every possible effort to recover the papers."

Mr. Grainer's eyes narrowed viciously: but he merely settled a little more firmly in his chair, squared his under jaw a trifle more pugnaciously and growled:

"Explain yourself, sir."

Morrison told him the whole story, sparing himself in no particular and ending with a hope that his auditor would not impute to him any intention to purloin the certificates.

"We do not, sir," growled the senior partner when he had done. "Mr. Haight and myself are quite well aware of the fact that you can reap no possible direct benefit from holding those certificates; but we know, also, that there are other reasons why it may be to your interest to keep them under cover until after that stockholders' meeting of the Eagle Creek combination tomorrow noon!"

His eyes glittered pugnaciously and the frown between them deepened. Morrison involuntarily put up his hand to his forehead.

"I—you—you mean——"

"I mean just this, Mr. Morrison!"

Mr. Grainer had risen from his chair, and was leaning across his mahogany desk, punctuating his words with sledge-hammer blows of his fist upon its shining surface.

"I mean that we are perfectly well aware of the fact that it means a great deal of money to a certain corporation—to Ballard, Larrimore & Swayne, to be precise—if those stock certificates of ours are not voted at that meeting tomorrow noon; and I mean, sir, if they are not produced at that meeting, and voted there by Mr. Fletcher in accordance with

Be sure and read "Hold-Up Versus Hold-Out," and "Ring to Ridgepole," in this issue. Next week a great historic story begins, called, "Leif the Bold; or, First in America," and next after that will come an absorbing story, entitled, "For Family Honor; or, A World-Wide Search." The Ledger is going to continue full of good things. Don't pass them by, for you'll regret it.

the plans which you have helped to formulate and mature up to this point, to put stripes on you if it takes the last dollar I have left. I'll see you doing time at Sing Sing if you hold them out on us, sir! That's what I mean—if you want it in plain words!"

Morrison went white to the lips. Involuntarily he started forward with his hands clenched; but he controlled himself with an effort and spoke quietly after a moment.

"I've told you the truth, Mr. Grainer—the whole truth as far as I know it about this matter. I hope I shall be able to find the certificates in time for the meeting. I'll do my level best. I shall be a thousand times more glad than you can possibly be to have this all cleared up. As for your suspicions—I'm sorry that I can't show you proof at once of their utter lack of foundation."

He turned on his heel, and left the room without another word. Grainer glared after him until the closing door shut his form from view. Then he turned to Fletcher.

"Fool or sharp?" he queried abruptly.

Big Bill Fletcher shook his head.

"Neither, I think. I'm inclined to believe he's telling the truth—though God knows! His moral cleanliness won't help the Eagle Creek combination a bit, though, unless he finds those papers. But you can't tell; he dined last night, remember, with Jimmie Ballard."

Mr. Grainer brought his fist down with a bang.

"The young whelp! There's a chip off the old block, in spite of his mincing 'sassiety' ways. That's the explanation of the whole business! It's a clean case of selling out. The one enemy we have had to fight all the way through this deal, as you know, has been the firm of Ballard, Larrimore & Swayne. Can't you see it all now? Why, it's as plain as the nose on your face!"

The clock was striking twelve when Morrison returned to his rooms. On the way from Grainer's, he went by the office of one of the leading detective agencies, and placed the case in their hands. His instructions were to spare neither pains nor expense in immediately locating the missing certificates. He was spent with the exertions and anxieties of the day, and was, in fact, approaching a collapse of his powers. He had been for days under severe strain, attending to the many details of the big deal whose fate now hung in the balance. He felt that immediate rest, and sleep if it could be had, were imperative to his further usefulness.

He flung himself wearily into his chair, and lighted a cigar. But try as he might, he could not still the tumult in his mind. He was held an unwilling witness to an endless procession of events that danced past his half-frantic imagination—the events of the past twenty-four hours; and ever, when the mocking throng had gone its length and his wearied mind strove for release, a fantastic shape of threatening aspect loomed out of the nebulous ether to tower above him, grotesque and terrible—and he heard, again, the snarling threats uttered by old John Grainer. And then, with a wrench, he aroused himself once more to begin again the endless review of the events leading up to his present situation.

How long he had continued this self-torture, Morrison never knew. He was suddenly recalled to acute self-consciousness by the ringing of his doorbell. Relieved by the interruption, he sprang to his feet and opened it himself.

His caller proved to be "Pussy-foot" Williams.

Morrison stiffened involuntarily for a moment—then invited the late-comer in. Williams accepted with a grave inclination of the head, and hung his hat and coat upon the hall tree. His host placed a chair for him and stirred the coals into a brighter glow.

Williams kept his gaze upon the fire, and seemed loath to speak. He removed his gloves, and accepted the cigar which Morrison offered, lighting it perfunctorily, and smoked silently for a few moments. The situation was becoming strained, but Morrison could not, to save his life, take the initiative. Suddenly the attorney turned to his host, with great apparent ingenuousness.

"Morrison," he said earnestly, "I've come to you as a friend. I'll confess that when you first told me about your losing those certificates I didn't believe a word of it; but I've been thinking the whole matter over, and I'm ready to revise that opinion. In fact, I have revised it already.

"Understand that I'm not talking to you now as an attorney—and especially as Grainer & Haight's attorney. My duty in that character is diametrically opposed to what I am undertaking now in my private capacity as your friend. I trust you will regard this call as a matter purely confidential—a matter entirely between you and me."

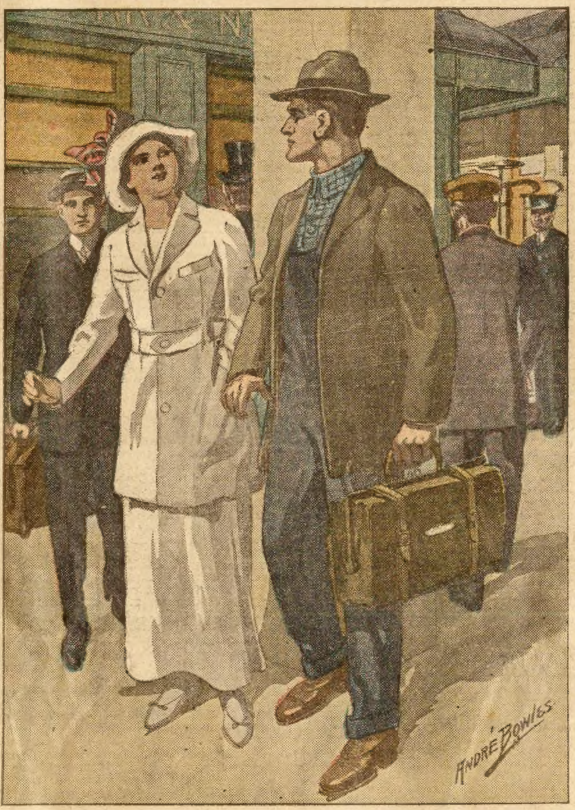
Morrison nodded, not a little bewildered. Williams went on:

"I've had several conferences with Grainer & Haight about those certificates; and their attitude, I'm sorry to say, is absolutely hostile to you. They can't see but one side of the matter, and they're not going to listen to reason for a minute. They're sure it's just a bunco game.

"Now I can see," Mr. Williams resumed judicially, counting off his arguments upon his pudgy fingers, "that your story is not at all an impossible or even an unlikely one. I've taken time to analyze the situation critically, and I'm ready to acquit you of any intentional wrongdoing. I've no doubt that some scoundrel—some common pickpocket as like as not—got the papers off you after you left the club. Of course, Jimmie Ballard can't be suspected of anything like that; that's entirely out of the question!"

"Yes, of course!" assented Morrison; but the settled gloom of his face belied his words. In fact, he was wondering at that minute whether Jimmie Ballard might not have had a hand in it. Williams droned on oracularly:

"Besides, even if Jimmie were a different sort of a chap, and we were convinced that he was responsible for the disappearance of the certificates, you've got no proof—and you've got no time to proceed against him, even if you had. Old Grainer's got his back up, and nobody on earth can do a thing with him. He's bound to have your blood. I've advised him to go slow; but he's just like a bull in a china shop, and won't listen to advice. His mind is made up to one thing: If you fail to produce those certificates by noon tomorrow, he's going to proceed against you mercilessly. I happen to know that a warrant for your arrest is at this moment in the hands of a deputy sheriff, and he's waiting for the noon hour to strike tomorrow before serving it."



"You haven't disguised yourself very well."

In spite of himself, Morrison started.

"Oh, I say, Mr. Williams!" he protested, "surely Mr. Grainer is not going to any such extreme as that. Why, he knows better. He couldn't do anything to me, you know!"

The attorney held up an adjuring hand.

"Take my word for it, my boy! I've been in the law a good many years, and I've seen far more preposterous things carried through in the name of the law. Law isn't always justice—more's the pity! I tell you that in this case the cards are stacked against you. You haven't a ghost of a show unless you can produce those certificates. You've got one of the most powerful combinations on Wall street to fight—and you're just a young fellow, and almost a stranger in New York. They'll railroad you, sure as the Lord made little apples!"

Morrison lay back in his chair, stunned. Williams continued:

"I happen to know something about you, and that's why I've taken it upon myself to come here and talk this way tonight. You came here from a country town, where the game is different and everybody knows everybody else's family history back to the landing of the Pilgrims. A situation like this couldn't possibly happen there. It's not to be wondered at that you don't know how to meet it here; and that's why I've come to advise you. If you were a New York man, I'd say it was none of my business. As it is, my sense of fair play won't permit me to stand by and see you made the goat without trying to help you save your bacon."

"Pussy-foot" was getting his metaphors mixed, as was his habit when greatly in earnest, but Morrison was too badly shaken up to take note of anything beyond his own sense of terrible need and the fact that help was being offered. He turned wretchedly to Williams:

"What on earth can I do?"

"There's only one thing you can do, right now. And remember that I'm speaking to you as a private individual and not as an attorney! Your only chance is to get away—get out of New York—get where they can't reach you, and stay there till this thing blows over. It makes no difference where you go—so you keep your whereabouts a secret and get away at once!"

At two o'clock that morning, within an hour after his late caller had gone, Joseph Morrison, dressed as a laborer, was making his way down the platform to take a west-bound train. He was taking with him only a few bills and a single, disreputable looking telescope valise. In this unlikely guise, he found himself suddenly face to face with Minnie Moss.

The girl was with a merry group of young people, bidding farewell to some companions who were going by the same train. Morrison instantly dropped his eyes, and slipped into the shadow of a friendly pillar to wait until they had gone. But a few minutes later Miss Moss, in apparently the most accidental manner possible, was standing within a couple of feet of him, her laughing face turned toward her companions, and saying to him between the gibes that passed between them:

"You haven't disguised yourself very well. You see I knew you at first sight. What is it all about? Is it a bet?"

Out of the depths of his misery, he answered:

"No, it's not a bet. I can't explain to you now. I'm in deep trouble and you may hear evil things of me. But I ask you not to judge until I can come back and state my own case—until I can come before you undisguised."

The girl turned her eyes full upon him as she answered quietly:

"I can promise that! but disguise or none, I'll know you whenever you come before me."

The next instant the train was starting, and her companions bore down upon her and carried her off. Morrison missed his platform and was compelled to take a train an hour later; but he carried with him the comforting remembrance of a pair of deep, blue eyes that gazed trustingly into his own, and a vibrant voice that thrilled over and over in his heart: "Disguise or none, I'll know you whenever you come before me!"

The conclusion of this interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year and we have stories awaiting publication that you cannot afford to miss.

* * *

Promoted.

"Well!" said Mrs. Pflantrop, meeting Mrs. Herkimer, "when you accepted that position which Mr. Pflantrop secured for you as housekeeper for that widower with the twin babies and seven other children, you promised me that you would remain there for at least six months."

"And here I am back in less'n three months?"

"Yes. Why is that?"

"That is because I could not save car fare on which to return sooner."

"Was not the place as represented?"

"Yes, ma'am. That is to say, he was a widower with nine children, two of whom were twins and real small. Also I had a room to myself, and also I did not have any washing to do. But I was expected to cook for three boarders besides caring for the children."

"Aside from that was the place all right?"

"You might call it that. Smidgens is making money, or was until this Mexican affair came up—"

"I didn't think his business depended upon anything of the sort."

"It doesn't. Mr. Smidgens is one of these people who know just how the matter should be settled, and he is too busy telling the community about it to attend to his own business."

"But aside from that—"

"Aside from that things were fine! I used to get the cow milked on time, and I got my fifteen dollars a month right on the dot."

"And so you left those babies?"

"Yes; and left the girl who was too old to be bossed by a hired woman."

"Did the children like you?"

"I think so; they pulled the sleeves out of all my dresses and the skirts off the waists hangin' on me."

"That is too bad! Of course, under the circumstances I do not blame you at all. But I cannot help thinking of those poor motherless little children."

"They'll get along all right."

"I presume Providence will look after them. What do you contemplate doing?"

"I contemplate taking the next train back if I get my shopping done."

"I thought you had given up being their housekeeper."

"I am not going to be any man's hired woman any longer; I've got a better plan."

"Oh, I'll bet you are going to marry Mr. Smidgens!"

"No, ma'am! Not at all! I am going to marry that bunch of motherless children, and it ain't my fault that they have Smidgens for an incumbrance. But I'll tell you this: He'll send his boarders elsewhere, and consider that Mexican situation settled, and buckle down to business about day after tomorrow! I've promoted myself!"

* * *

All About Burns.

A gentleman from London, who was staying in a country village, volunteered to give a lecture on "Burns" to the members of the local mutual improvement society.

Before a good audience he was warming to his subject and was giving Burns' "The Cottar's Saturday Night" in splendid style, when an interruption came from a workingman standing at the back of the hall.

"What is it, my man?" asked the lecturer, breaking off.

"I was wonderin' when you was goin' to give us a few 'ints."

"Hints?" queried the puzzled lecturer.

"Yes, 'ints," growled the man at the back. "I paid threepence to come in, 'coz you was supposed to know all about burns, and there you stand saying poetry like a parrot, while my missus, who's upset a saucepan o' bilin' water over 'er foot, is waitin' to 'ear whether she'd best souse it with oil or shake the flour dredger over it."

* * *

No Enjoyment.

A certain deacon was one of the best of men, but by nature very irascible. A cow was so exceedingly disorderly, as the deacon was attempting to milk her one morning, that the old Adam got the better of him and he vented his excited feelings in a volley of execrations very undeaconish in their character. At this moment the good deacon's pastor appeared unexpectedly on the scene and announced his presence by saying:

"Why, deacon! Can it be? Are you swearing?"

"Well, parson," replied the deacon, "I didn't think of any one being near by, but the truth is, I never shall enjoy religion as long as I keep this cow."

The Count's Revenge

Or, AN EYE FOR AN EYE

By Adrienne Roucolle

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CHAPTER IV.

THE SON'S SACRIFICE.

LEFT alone, Monsieur de Beaufort remained for a time lost in his gloomy thoughts, trying in vain to find a means of escape from the relentless revenge of the man who held him so absolutely in his power; but do what he could, struggle as he would against his fate, he could find no loophole of escape, nothing which could give him hope of salvation. Suddenly the time-yellowed envelope which had dropped from his nerveless fingers caught his eye as it lay on the carpet at his feet. His enemy had forgotten this proof—the only really damaging one which could be had against him. All he needed was to destroy it, then deny Count del Sarto's accusations. His word would be taken in preference to that of a stranger. With a cry of joy he picked up the envelope, opened it, and drew forth the letter it contained. But his face lost its exalted light the minute his eyes caught the few words written at the top of the missive:

"Photographic copy of original."

The moment of hope, which these four words destroyed in a second, made the despair which followed more deep, more heart-breaking than ever. Count del Sarto had not miscalculated his effects, showing that he was past master in the savage refinement of cruelty. Crushed by the blow, Monsieur de Beaufort held the letter long in his hand, the growing horror of the situation leaving him without strength to read the written words which seemed to dance before his eyes in a fantastic whirl of letters. His valet's knocking at the door finally awakened him from his dream of terror. He hastily concealed the letter and called out to the valet to enter. Jean came to inquire if Monsieur wanted to dress to go down to lunch.

"I am so busy," answered Monsieur de Beaufort, making a powerful effort to appear calm, "that I will not descend to lunch. Have it sent up here, then leave me for the afternoon. I will not have need of your services until dinner time."

The afternoon passed, and Monsieur de Beaufort, after reviewing the past and facing the present in its true light, was unable to find any solution for the future, which loomed up the more menacing the more he thought of it. The return of the excursion party, with the merry noise of jingling bells and happy, laughing voices, brought back De Beaufort to the grim reality of the awful ordeal he had now to face—the meeting with his son.

Hector de Beaufort had received Count del Sarto's message as he was leaving the Grotte de Gargas, and made anxious by the strange manner with which the sealed letter was given him, he asked of his fiancee and her father the permission to open the letter. Smilingly Jeanne de Granville granted his request, as taking her father's arm she walked away, pointing out the odd shading of color in the quarry of blue stone to the left of them. Thus it came that Hector de Beaufort was able to read the startling message unobserved by any one interested enough in him to make note of the emotions which naturally were painted one by one upon his expressive face. His first feeling was one of surprise, and he looked again at the superscription on the envelope to make sure he was not reading a letter addressed to some one else. Then, reading further, he became indignant as he realized that the whole was simply a blackmailing scheme. Finally this indignation changed to consternation as he read the photographic copy of the letter showing his father's handwriting and dated twenty years back, which seemed to give a semblance of truth to the awful story which at first he had refused to believe. He read again the Count's accusation and the price he set on his silence, and of a sudden a terrible fear took possession of him. What if this was the truth! Forgetful of everything, he remained staring at the written lines which seemed to burn themselves upon his very soul.

Mademoiselle de Granville, noticing at last that her fiance remained away much longer than the mere reading of a letter required, turned around to see what was keeping him so long. The change on the young man's face frightened and startled her in one. Taking two steps toward him, she asked in anxiety:

"Not any bad news I hope, Monsieur Hector?"

Returning to himself, as he looked up and caught sight of the girl's anxious face which told him that his own must have betrayed his inward emotion, Hector de Beaufort made a violent effort to regain his self-control, and smiled in a somewhat constrained fashion, as he folded up the letter and the proofs it contained. He advanced toward the young girl and her father, who had turned at his daughter's question, and answered:

"I don't think it is anything serious, Mademoiselle Jeanne, a mere business matter which my father will easily set right. What startled me is that this matter does not concern me personally and I am at a loss to understand why this letter should have been addressed to me!" Then with forced gayety he added, "Let not this incident mar your pleasure, mademoiselle, and enjoy the return home as much as you did the ascent."

But in spite of his efforts, all the way back to Luchon, Hector de Beaufort was haunted by the remembrance of the letter which seemed to burn through his breast pocket to his very heart, carrying with it the ever-growing fear that in some way this letter would cause his separation from the blooming girl by his side, who became more desirable to him as the fear of losing her became more intense. Reaching Luchon, he made a hurried excuse for leaving his companions, and hastened at once to his father's apartment. The minute he caught sight of the upset, haggard face of the elder man, his heart sank within him, as in a second all the ideals of his youth were shattered. The love and respect he had for his father, who, he thought, was above reproach, his pride in his upright integrity, all fled as he saw the guilty, conscience-stricken face.

"You don't mean to say that the letter told the truth!" he cried, though his father had not uttered a word.

Monsieur de Beaufort, who had risen when his son had entered the room, sank to his knees before the young man, pleading in an agony of despair:

"Pardon me, Hector, the sin of youth has found me out. Don't judge the man for the error of the boy!"

For a second Hector de Beaufort looked at the kneeling man in frozen horror, as stronger than ever the conviction of the awful truth dawned upon him! His father had been a blackmailer, that most contemptible of all human criminals! He had pushed his victim to death, and now they both faced merciless revenge from the husband of this victim, a revenge in which he, the innocent, would have to carry the greatest weight of suffering, since to save the family honor he would be asked to sacrifice the whole of his life's happiness. Mechanically he aided the sobbing man to rise, saying in tones which surprised him by their calm:

"Try to control yourself, father. Tears cannot help us now. We must think, then act."

Falling back on the chair to which his son had conducted him, Monsieur de Beaufort replied in accents suddenly made clear and firm by his resolution:

"I have thought and I will not hesitate to act. Tomorrow I shall be dead."

"Did not the man tell you as he did me that your death would only hasten the public disgrace? That you would not be dead twenty-four hours before all of France would know of your sin?"

"He did, but that shall not stop me."

"And the honor of our name! Do you want it to be stained with disgrace, the first that has ever touched it!"

"The world soon forgets!" was the dogged reply.

"What, you a de Beaufort are turning out a physical coward! Monsieur, I am surprised!"

The stinging reproach caused Monsieur de Beaufort to lift his lowered head, as looking at his son he said in a perfect agony of despair:

"A coward, Hector, a physical coward! when I have just stated that I intended to die!"

"It is sometimes harder to live, monsieur, and in my eyes the man who dies when he should live is a coward."

Monsieur de Beaufort wrung his hands as he said:

"It was for your sake, Hector, that I wanted to die. I did not want you to be sacrificed. I wanted you to be happy."

"Happy!" the word was an exclamation of bitterness. "How could I be happy while bearing a name that has been dragged in the mud of a newspaper scandal! Do you suppose Monsieur de Granville would give me his daughter, that he would consent to have her become Madame de Beaufort if the past were known!"

"Spare me, Hector," pleaded the father. "This is killing me," and Monsieur de Beaufort buried his head in his hands.

With a slight softening in his voice, though his face remained set and stern, the young man said:

"I did not intend to speak so harshly, and would not have done so had you not insisted on dying when it is your duty to live."

Completely subdued, Monsieur de Beaufort asked:

"Then what must we do?"

"Save our name, monsieur, no matter what the cost."

"You will marry this man's daughter."

"If he insists, yes."

"But she is——" the words died in Monsieur de Beaufort's throat as he suddenly remembered that no one was to know of the girl's infamous parentage.

"What is she?" Hector de Beaufort's voice was full of anxiety, as the fear there was something to be said about the girl's moral character.

"I—I don't know, but I fear she might be like her father, heartless and cruel."

"That is nothing; I feared you meant something else."

"But Mademoiselle de Granville! Have you thought of her?"

"You don't suppose I have forgotten her, do you?" There was a world of misery in the young man's voice as he spoke these words, as the full extent of the sacrifice he was about to make came to him.

Though he had known Jeanne de Granville but a short time, her gentle ways, sunshiny disposition, and fresh young beauty had appealed to him, and he had fallen in love with his fiancee, though when the project of marriage had first been broached to him he had merely considered that from the standpoint of wealth, nobility, and education, the girl was a fit person to become the mother of the future heirs of the de Beauforts. Like so many young men in his world, he had decided to marry because it was his duty to continue the name of which he was so proud. He had therefore been delighted to find that he could love his future wife as well. That the girl loved him in return, her candid eyes, which had not yet learned to veil their secret, had already told him, and he had allowed himself to drift into happy dreams of future bliss, when the blow fell.

"How can you break with the de Granville girl after things have progressed so far?"

"The engagement has not yet been announced, which greatly simplifies matters," answered Hector de Beaufort, with just a little show of contempt as he realized how weak and cowardly his father really was. He knew that he would have to see to everything, that he need not expect any aid from the one who was the cause of all this misery. Little by little the love he once had for his father had died within him, and now it was merely through duty, because of the honor of the family name, that he acted.

"What explanation will you give? What excuse will you find?" Like a ship without a rudder, Monsieur de Beaufort's troubled thoughts sought to find some vantage, some starting-point from which to work to solve the problem he was too weak to face directly.

"If I can't find anything better, there is always the excuse of changing my mind. I will appear to the de Granvilles as a contemptible cur, but for their daughter's sake they will keep this opinion to themselves."

"But the girl loves you, Hector. It will break her heart."

"Father," the voice was low and stern as the face twitched in pain, "why say these things, why make it so hard for me to do my duty?"

"That you may see the folly of your sacrifice and let me carry out my plans."

Hector de Beaufort made a gesture of impatience as he said abruptly:

"Have you no power of reasoning? Can't you realize that whatever way we decide the girl's heart must be broken? I would no more have the right to ask her to be mine if the truth were known than her father would have the right to let her marry me. We must be men; we must face our fate as men. Where does this Count del Sarto stop?"

"He did not tell me." Monsieur de Beaufort was thoroughly subdued by the virile strength of character displayed by his son, who, now that adversity struck them, exhibited undreamed of powers of decision and manliness.

"Jean will find him for us," saying which Hector sat down at his father's desk and wrote the following words:

"Monsieur: It is very important for me to see you tonight, as I must know what arrangements to make for the future. Please grant me an interview, stating time and place in your answer.

"Respectfully yours,
"Hector de Beaufort."

Handing the note to his father for him to read, while he addressed the envelope, Hector rang for Jean, who entered the room before Monsieur de Beaufort had time to question his son as to the reason why he wanted the interview.

"Jean," ordered the young man, as he sealed the letter, "please deliver this letter to Monsieur the Count del Sarto and await the answer. I do not know exactly where he is stopping, but you will easily find out by making inquiries at the principal hotels. Return with the answer as soon as possible."

"Yes, monsieur. Is that all, monsieur?"

"Yes."

Jean bowed and left the room, and Hector, guessing the question his father was about to ask, said in explanation:

"I must know as soon as possible what is expected of me. I will now send word to the de Granvilles that an unexpected business engagement will deprive me of the pleasure of accompanying them to the Casino tonight."

Guessing that in spite of his outward calm, Hector was suffering terribly, Monsieur de Beaufort cried in a sudden outburst of agonized despair:

"And to think that you should suffer all this because of me!"

"The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation," thought the young man bitterly, though aloud he said, as he folded the hurried note he had written to Monsieur de Granville, "It seems that it can't be helped, so we must make the best of it."

Ringing for a servant, he gave the man the note to deliver, saying:

"Monsieur de Beaufort is indisposed this evening, and will not descend to dinner, so have his dinner and mine sent up to us."

When the man had left, Monsieur de Beaufort said in discouraged misery:

"Why send for something to eat for me? I am not hungry."

"You must eat, father, if you hope to keep up your strength. I am not hungry, yet I am going to eat. Follow my example."

Silence fell between them, each lost in his unhappy thoughts; this silence lasted until a servant brought up the ordered dinners, and after setting the table in the little sitting-room, left the two men to themselves.

"Come, father," said Hector, with just a little softening in his voice, for his father's abject misery touched the remaining spark of love still alive in the ruins of his heart, "eating is part of the game of life since we must eat to live." and he set the example by beginning to eat, though each bite seemed to choke him.

Jean returned before the meal was over with a note from Count del Sarto stating that he would see Monsieur Hector de Beaufort between eight and nine in his apartment at the Grand Hotel, suite 125. Dismissing Jean for the night, stating that his father would not need his services any more that evening, Hector handed the Count's letter to Monsieur de Beaufort, finished his meal rapidly, and rising, took up his hat, saying with the surprising calm he had manifested from the first:

"I will let you know the result of my interview as soon as I return." Then, without another word, Hector de Beaufort left the room.

CHAPTER V.

FRANCESCA.

WHEN at half-past eight Hector de Beaufort knocked at the door of suite 125 of the Grand Hotel, Count del Sarto's voice called from within:

"Come in."

Hector opened the door and entered.

FOUND OUT

A Trained Nurse Discovered Its Effect.

No one is in better position to know the value of food and drink than a trained nurse.

Speaking of coffee a nurse in Pa. writes: "I used to drink strong coffee myself, and suffered greatly from headaches and indigestion.

"While on a visit to my brothers I had a good chance to try Postum, for they drank it altogether in place of coffee. After using Postum two weeks I found I was much benefited and finally my headaches disappeared and also the indigestion.

"Naturally I have since used Postum among my patients, and have noticed a marked benefit where coffee has been left off and Postum used.

"I observe a curious fact about Postum when used by mothers. It greatly helps the flow of milk in cases where coffee is inclined to dry it up, and where tea causes nervousness.

"I find trouble in getting servants to make Postum properly. But when it is prepared according to directions on package and served hot with cream, it is certainly a delicious beverage."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Postum comes in two forms:

Regular Postum—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.

Instant Postum—is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage **instantly.** 30c and 50c tins.

The cost per cup of both kinds is about the same.

"There's a Reason" for Postum.

—sold by Grocers.

Though outwardly calm his heart was beating rapidly as with one swift, anxious look, he took in all the details of the hard, stern face. In that one glance he read his fate. The man before him had suffered too much ever to forgive. Count del Sarto, who had risen when the young man had entered, pointed out a chair to his visitor, saying in the same tones of icy politeness:

"Have a seat, Monsieur de Beaufort."

Hector sat down, and for a time there was silence, the young man not knowing how to broach the painful subject to the man he felt must be without pity. While he thought, Count del Sarto examined him closely. The frank, open face with its mass of sunny, brown hair, its sensitive boyish mouth and honest eyes impressed him favorably. In his hard, unfeeling way he was sorry that this young man was to be made to suffer for the sin of another, but the feeling of sympathy was not strong enough to cause him for one second to waver in his plans. He would be avenged, no matter who suffered, be they innocent or guilty. Was he not going to sacrifice his own daughter? Why should he have more feelings for this handsome, boyish stranger than for his own child?

Finally Hector found it was foolish as well as unmanly for him to hesitate longer, so nerving himself for the ordeal, he said abruptly:

"I received your letter, Count del Sarto, and I came to inquire if there was not a mistake, if I understood what you expected of me."

"Did your father say there was a mistake?"

"No." The admission cost Hector de Beaufort untold anguish. What would he not have given to have been able to tell this man that he lied, that his father was not the vile wretch he had painted him to be!

"Well, since I made no mistake concerning the past, is it likely I should make any concerning the future?"

"You will insist on my marrying your daughter?"

"Yes." The word was so firmly pronounced as to give it the force of a blow from a sledge-hammer.

"In what way will this aid your revenge, since in this I would be made to suffer more perhaps than the one you want to punish."

"He will suffer through you. That's what I want. As you realize that your misery comes to you through him, you will learn to hate him as you now despise his cowardice and dishonesty."

"Monsieur, you are speaking of my father," broke in Hector in proud loyalty, though in the depths of his heart he felt that Count del Sarto was telling the truth.

"I know, and therefore I have no more to say on the subject. I merely wanted to show you in what way you are going to be useful to me in the working out of my plans."

"And for that you are going to ruin my life!" The exclamation escaped Hector's vigilance.

"I don't exactly see why your life should be utterly ruined, monsieur. My daughter is beautiful, she is refined, cultured, a perfect lady; in fact, a woman any man would be proud to call wife."

"But I do not love her."

"In our world, Monsieur de Beaufort, how many men really love the woman they marry?"

"That is true, monsieur, but the case with me is different, since I am in love with some one else."

"Your present fiancee?"

Count del Sarto smiled in bitter contempt as he answered with his heartless indifference:

"You'll have to forget that love." Hector made a gesture of protest, but the Count did not give him time to voice that protest, for he added: "You are fortunately of an age where one can love deeply and frequently. The time for the one great love of your life has not yet come, of that I am sure, for I saw you the other night with Mademoiselle de Granville, and the look in your eyes was simply that a young, healthy man gives to any blooming, attractive girl who has arrested his passing fancy."

"And you think that your daughter may have the power to arouse that one love of which you speak?"

"She may and she may not. It all depends on circumstance."

"And you are willing to risk her happiness like that, willing to tie her for life to a man who may learn to hate her because she will be the indirect cause of his misery?" The voice which set this question was full of repressed indignation.

"Let us understand each other, Monsieur de Beaufort," answered Count del Sarto abruptly. "In my letter this morning I told you of the oath of vengeance I took twenty years ago. I have lived for that alone, and to carry it out I am ready to sacrifice everything, myself as well as others. I do not love my daughter, for I never loved her mother, and with most men the instinct of fatherhood is simply an extension of the love borne the wife. Knowing this, you will readily see why I will no more spare her than I will spare you, since my vengeance comes above and before everything."

"Does your daughter know of the role you intend her to play?"

"No."

"Then how do you know she will consent?"

"She has no other will than mine. She will no more dare disobey my wishes than you will."

"Poor girl!" The exclamation of pity escaped from Hector as he thought how hard a taskmaster the relentless man before him must have been in the past that he was now so sure that his will would not be contested.

"I suppose you are now convinced that there is nothing left for you but to obey my wishes and save the family honor?" asked Count del Sarto, after a pause.

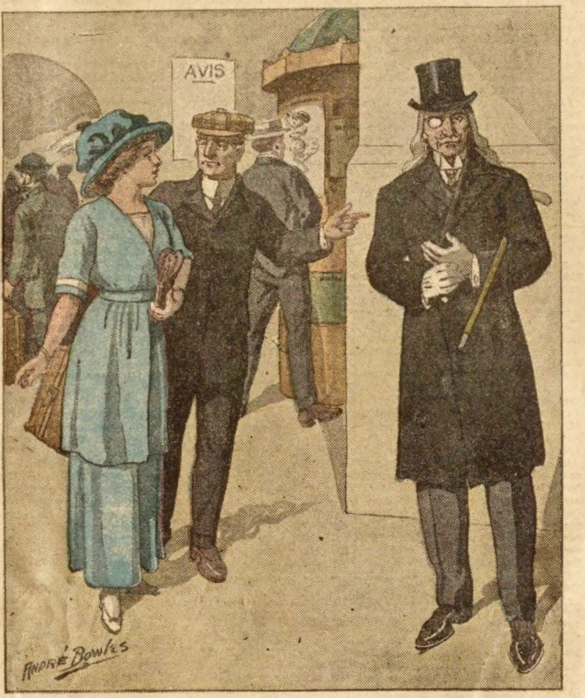
"Is there nothing else which would appease your anger?"

"Nothing."

"Not even money—the whole of our fortune—father's and mine?"

"I am richer than the both of you. I have no need of money. Had I wanted it, I should have asked for it."

There was another silence during which Count del Sarto kept his flinty eyes on the young man, guessing well the struggle which was going on within the suffering heart, admiring in his cold, unfeeling way the absolute control with which Hector de Beaufort subdued all outward manifestation of his disappointment and misery. Suddenly making up his mind, knowing how useless all appeal to the callous, hard-hearted man would be, the young man rose to his feet with the abrupt question:



Guilio guided her to the Count.

"What do you expect of me, monsieur, in exchange for your silence?"

"First break your engagement with Mademoiselle de Granville."

"I shall do so tomorrow." The voice was harsh and tense because of the repression the young man imposed upon himself.

"On Thursday next you must be ready to be presented to my daughter."

"I shall be ready."

"You will have to be very careful in not letting her guess that you are being forced into this marriage with her, for she has very strait-laced ideas, and might refuse to carry out her part of the contract. And in that event, the vengeance I had planned being taken from me, I would have to resort to a more public way of punishing the guilty. Understand?"

"Perfectly, monsieur."

"Within a week you must announce your engagement, and in six weeks you must be married."

"So soon, monsieur! Could you not delay this marriage a few months for the sake of Mademoiselle de Granville? Our engagement was almost public, her parents have already told a number of intimate friends, and she would be placed by my almost immediate marriage to another in a most trying position for a young girl."

"I am not considering Mademoiselle de Granville in this matter, monsieur, I am simply giving you my orders," came the heartless reply, as Count del Sarto realized that the more he made the innocent Jeanne de Granville suffer, the more would the young man who loved her hate the one who was the direct cause of her misery. In the long years during which he had planned his vengeance, he had studied every shade of cruelty, every refinement of torment. From this man who had taken everything from him, he intended to take everything—the love of his son, the respect of his fellow men, the honor of his name!

Hector realized that it would be useless to struggle further against the unbending will, so he said with a sigh that was almost a sob:

"They shall be obeyed, since I suppose it is useless to try to make you change your decision."

"Absolutely useless."

"I must then be married in about eight weeks?"

"Yes."

"On that day, I suppose, having accomplished your purpose, you will give me the infamous letter you hold against my father?"

"Give you the letter! You surely don't expect it! A blackmailer never gives up his proofs. Ask your father if you doubt my word!"

This cruel dart caused Hector de Beaufort a quiver of suffering his pride could not repress. Hoarsely he asked:

"Then you hold it over our heads as a constant menace!"

"Certainly!"

"You can use it any time to bring about the disgrace I am trying to avert?"

"I could, but I don't think I will, since I have other plans which concern your father exclusively, so unless unforeseen events occur, you have no more to fear either for yourself or the family name."

"This is awful!"

"The crime it is made to punish was awful also," was the merciless reply.

Realizing that he had about reached the limit of his endurance, that his suffering, rage, and indignation were rapidly getting the better of his resolution, Hector de Beaufort took his hat, walked to the door, and, without another word, without even a farewell bow, he left the room. Count del Sarto did not call him back, for though the young man had made no promises after knowing that his sacrifice would not free him of the terrible power their enemy held over his father and himself, he knew that his wishes would be obeyed in the fear of the immediate disgrace which a refusal would bring to them.

He was not mistaken. The next day after a heartbreaking explanation between Hector and Monsieur de Granville, the family left Luchon suddenly, taking with them a heartbroken girl, who, no more than her parents, could understand the cause of the unexpected change in the young man's feelings, causing him thus to break his word and bring upon them the unmerited shame which a broken engagement always attaches to a girl's name. He further knew that a great coldness had sprung up between father and son, and this assured him that his vengeance was well under way.

On Sunday Count del Sarto received a telegram from Guilio that he and the Senorita Francesca would arrive in Luchon on the Tuesday afternoon train. As the train steamed into the station, Count del Sarto was in waiting on the platform. A feeling of pride and unconscious admiration stole over him when he first caught sight of his daughter, who, timid and almost frightened, by the staring eyes fixed upon her, followed Guilio closely. He guided her through the crowd to the waiting Count, who did not advance to meet them.

She was more than beautiful, this girl with the timid, fawnlike eyes and small, sensitive mouth, for on looking at her one was conscious of a charm, a mental influence which was not that of mere physical beauty. One felt a living, throbbing soul back of the solemn face; in the eyes shone a light not of earth. She was more spiritual than material, yet she attracted both the senses and the soul. Short, like most Italian women, she had none of their thickness of figure, being slender though not thin, with well-rounded curves, which her simple traveling dress sought to hide rather than reveal.

Her one striking feature were the eyes. Once seen they could never be forgotten. For the rest, the nose was small and straight, of the Madonna type, the skin a dead white, the hair of a bluish black, the vivid scarlet of the lips giving the only dash of color to that strange combination of female loveliness.

"Good afternoon, Francesca," said Count del Sarto, in greeting as he pressed a cold kiss on the girl's cheek.

The caress chilled her, its utter lack of feeling going to the sensitive heart, destroying in an instant the joyous anticipations which his letter had aroused in his soul so eager for love and affection. If he called her to him, it must be that he was not as indifferent as she thought. He cared a little for her! Such had been the hope which had come to her as she had read his order to rejoin him in Luchon, and this hope was destroyed with the first words. She sighed deeply in resigned misery, and following her father she entered the carriage which was to drive them to the hotel.

"You are looking well," remarked Count del Sarto after a time, seeing that the girl did not speak.

"I am feeling perfectly well," she answered, looking up to see if at last there was an expression of tenderness, of interest on the cold, severe face. There was not the slightest trace of softening emotion, and the heavy lids were again lowered over the sad eyes, hiding the misty rings of unshed tears which suddenly obscured their luster.

Reaching the hotel, Count del Sarto said to his daughter:

"I will have you conducted to your room where you can rest until dinner time. Tomorrow we will talk."

Ordering one of the men of the hotel to conduct the young lady to the room he had rented next to his, the Count bowed with old-fashioned courtesy, motioning to Guilio to carry up the suitcases. Thus did Count del Sarto welcome home his daughter after not seeing her in two years.

(Continued next week.)

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Yours very truly,
THOMAS A. BENNETT,
Greensburg, Indiana.

Personally appeared before me this 14th day of February, 1913, Mr. T. A. Bennett, who subscribed the above statement and made oath that the same is true in substance and in fact.

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A Triple Mystery

Or, Longman's Test Case

By Charles Morris Butler

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Begun in No. 40, October 3. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER IX.

RIVAL SUITORS.

TO SAY the least, Longman was in a quandary. He had arrived in Vaughnton expecting in some manner to connect Wharton with the Miller Brothers' robbery. So far not a mention could be made of that worthy, and instead he found Adolph Miller openly accusing his confidential clerk of the crime. And in turn, the clerk making a counter-charge against his employer. This was not in keeping with his desires in the matter at all.

He did not wish either of these men proven guilty. He realized, of course, that facts would be facts, and he could not have control over something which had transpired in the past. Anyway, why should he care who was guilty so long as he cleared up the matter? The persons he was to satisfy were Shea, Jenks and Whitcomb, and in doing so to win his spurs as a real detective.

"I suppose you wonder why I accuse young Barstow of the robbery?" said Miller as the two ate supper in the hotel in the quiet of Longman's room.

"I am surprised," returned Longman, "because I was given to understand that no clew to the crime was had. Besides this, I have just come from Haynes' store in Lewiston, where a very similar robbery took place, and I am satisfied that I know who the robber is. I have allowed myself to hope that I could connect the two robberies in some way as to be able to fasten the crime on the same party. If it turns out that Barstow is the party who robbed you, this hope will be shattered. These robberies will turn out to be two separate and distinct crimes."

"Haynes' store, you say, in Lewiston?" inquired Mr. Miller, growing quite excited. "And you think the cases similar—that the same person committed both?"

"That is, I had hopes that I could prove it so," replied the detective.

"Perhaps you can!" exclaimed the merchant, exultantly. "Perhaps you can!" he repeated, rubbing his hands together and smiling grimly. "George Barstow was once an employe in the Haynes' store. What do you think of that?"

"The case grows interesting," said Longman. "I can see what you imply. You will have to convince me against my will, however. As I said before, I am absolutely positive in my own mind that I know who robbed Haynes'—but I may be mistaken."

"Let's get down to brass tacks then," said Adolph, "and I will explain myself. About four years ago my brother Herman was appointed postmaster of Vaughnton. At that time this town was classed as one of the fourth class. About two years ago, the class was raised a notch and we were given an assistant postmaster. Young Barstow at that time was employed as head clerk at Haynes', had taken the civil service examination in Borden County and stood first on the list. Naturally he was made Herman's assistant. He moved to Vaughnton and boarded with Mrs. Killmer.

"Mrs. Killmer, by the way, is the mother of Mary Killmer, my bookkeeper, the girl you saw in my office tonight. Naturally Barstow and Miss Killmer have been thrown very much in each other's society. The girl, I am sorry to say, does not seem to object to Barstow's attentions and rather encourages him. Before he came here, it was rather understood that some day Mary—Miss Killmer—would—ah—would become my wife!"

Longman started from his seat, perceptibly, then sat down again quietly. He was too good a diplomat to show his feelings on the surface. He saw the whole gist of the story in a nutshell: Miller and Barstow were rivals in the affections of Miss Killmer and both were insanely jealous! Whether this jealousy would lead to extremes or not was a matter of conjecture just at this time.

"At least, that was my hope. I spoke to Barstow about his conduct with Mary—Miss Killmer, but he refused to give her up. The young upstart, making only $60 a month, is no fit companion for her, when I can lavish a fortune upon her! But she seems to be infatuated with him. He has been taking her out buggy-riding on Sundays, goes to dances with her, theaters, parties and all that. Where does he get all this money to spend? That's what made me suspicious of him in the first place! He is spending altogether too much in proportion to what he earns."

"There are a whole lot of us doing that," acquiesced Longman.

"Two days after the robbery he buys a diamond ring for Miss Killmer, which is worth a hundred dollars if it is worth a cent."

"That proves nothing," said the detective.

"Why does he seem so secretive, then?" asked Miller in an aggrieved tone. "Why doesn't he come right out and explain matters? When the money was known to be lost, and I asked him for his advice, questioned him as to his goings-on, why does he try to evade me?"

"Do you want a candid answer?" asked Longman.

"Yes, I do."

"Well, put yourself in his place. Undoubtedly, when you quizzed him, perhaps without intending to do so, you may have inferred you thought him guilty——"

"As I know he is!"

"Guilty or innocent, he naturally resented the inference. Few employes recognize an employer's right to quiz them in regard to their actions after working hours. They sell their labors for a stipulated sum for certain number of hours a day. Whom they associate with, where they spend their time or money, they think is their own business. They naturally are very touchy on the subject of 'personal liberty.' Unless you have something direct to offer, why not eliminate him for a while, and let me go back to my original theory that the same party who robbed Haynes' store also robbed you?"

"That's just it," said Miller. "Barstow came from Haynes' place. Suppose he had the combination of the safe—wouldn't it be very easy for him to run down to Lewiston, rifle the safe and return here without my knowing anything about it?"

"Granted—a possibility, and worthy of credence. As Shakespeare says: 'How oft the means to do ill deeds makes ill deed done!' I take it, that you do not wish to convict an innocent man. While I concede that most criminal cases are subject to strong circumstantial evidence, rather than direct, much injustice is done the innocent through inference. I presume that it would be an easy matter to find out if Barstow had a horse out from the livery on June 9, or, if he went down on the train, to prove by the conductor that he did so. He is a well-known character, I presume, owing to his being connected with the postal service. I can set the wheels in motion, and also write Haynes to find out if Bårstow ever had the combination, and if the combination has been changed since he left."

"Do so," said Miller, vehemently. "I'll stand the expense. I'd give a year of my life to prove the upstart guilty! I want him out of my way!"

Longman did not want to acknowledge that things looked black for Mr. Barstow. Not because he had any friendly feelings toward the young man, but because he was loath to be convinced that Wharton was not guilty. It was a battle of hopes. Miller wanted to prove Barstow guilty, and Frank was just as anxious to prove the charlatan and pickpocket guilty. One was a known crook, the other presumably an honest man who had incurred the enmity of a jealous lover-employer.

"Let us go back to the store," said Longman. "Inasmuch as I have promised to let Barstow tell his side of the story, let me carry out my plans. I would suggest this, Mr. Miller: give Barstow all the rope he wants. Leave him with me tonight, and I will compare notes with you in the morning."

"I don't see why you have to take him into consideration at all."

"What harm can come of it? He knows that you suspect him, and if he tries to justify himself he may inadvertently incriminate himself. He knows all or nothing about the Haynes' robbery. He probably does not know that we connect him in any way with it. There's where I have the advantage of him."

"I'll take your advice. We'll go down to the store together, and you can talk it over. I am sorry that I can't ask you over to my home, but I am boarding at the Killmers' and they have no extra rooms."

"I am obliged to you for your consideration, but I can best work here from a public place where I can come and go as I please."

Miller and the detective walked back to the store. Most places of business were closed. All barber shops, drugstores, and the postoffice section of Miller's store being open, young Barstow was found at his post. A young lady, who Longman suspected was Miss Killmer, was behind the partition in the postoffice department talking to George.

Miller scowled savagely, turned and walked away.

A few minutes afterwards Longman and Barstow were conversing animatedly in the office.

"What did Miller have to say about me?" asked the young man rather pointedly.

"Nothing much," responded Longman, forcing himself to smile.

"Of course, he insinuated that I was the party who stole his money?"

"That you know. But he advanced no tangible evidence." Longman was trying his best to place the young man at his ease.

"He could not!" said the young man, "for I am innocent."

"No doubt, no doubt whatever," replied the detective, "but that does not hinder Mr. Miller from thinking you guilty."

"He doesn't think so. He hopes so—or rather he wants it to be so, or wants people to believe that it is so! There's a

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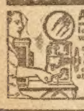

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difference. By the way, I know you are a detective or a postoffice inspector, which is it? I haven't the pleasure of knowing your name."

"I am a Chicago detective; my name is Longman. Why do you qualify your statements. Don't you think Miller really believes you guilty? You know whether you are or not."

"I know I am not, and I don't think that he thinks I am. He sees a chance to get me out of the way and that is what he wants to do. If he could blight my prospect and ruin my reputation he would be pleased to do so."

"Wouldn't it be wise for you to explain just what you mean? Remember, I have already heard Mr. Miller's side of the story, and what you say may be used against you if you are brought up to trial. I don't want to take advantage of your confidence. You may say as little or as much as you like."

"Then it is a foregone conclusion that I am going to be arrested?" asked the young man.

"That remains to be seen," responded Longman. "There is nothing to hinder Miller from preferring charges against you, but I don't think you could be convicted on the evidence so far obtained. On my part I should advise against it."

"Why? Because you think me innocent?"

"At present I think nothing either way. I have my own idea of the matter. But don't you think that you had best tell me your story, at least how you came to be connected with the house? Give me the real inside facts as to why you and your employer are at outs?"

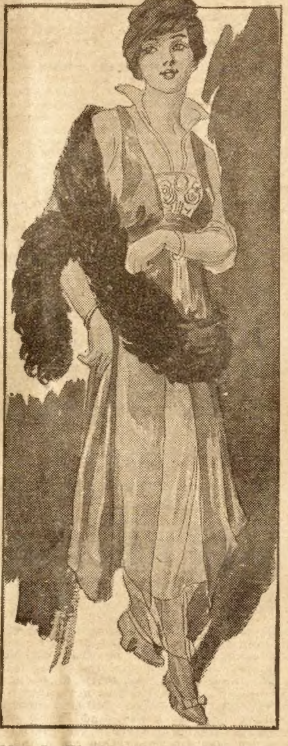
"You can guess the last, all right," said the young man.

"Certainly. Miss Killmer is the innocent cause of your mutual dislike. There's usually a woman at the bottom of all matters, for good or evil."

"In the first place I took the civil service examination for this post and got it. I am working for Uncle Sam, under Herman Miller, who is the postmaster. I don't consider that I am under any obligations to Adolph Miller at all, no matter how I consider Herman. Herman and I have never had an unpleasant word together. While I am not bound to do so, I do the bulk of Herman's work so that he can travel or work in the store. And because I understand groceries, I am not adverse to helping out when things are busy or when my work is slack. I am neither lazy nor unmindful of the duty I owe my associates. It is a matter of courtesy and free will, I don't have to do it.

"Adolph is an entirely different man than Herman. He is overbearing and vindictive. He goes out of his way to make things unpleasant for me, not because I do not do my work properly, but because I stand between him and Miss Killmer. Before I came here, Adolph never paid any attention to the girl, save to boss her around and show her that he was her master. Some people, you know, make love in that way—that is, by brute force, taking advantage of the helplessness of those depending upon them. Miss Killmer does not love Mr. Miller. He is not her kind, thank God! When I came here from Lewiston, before I knew the circumstances, I boarded with Mrs. Killmer. Naturally I got to know Mary very well, better than I should by simply working with her. I love her, she reciprocates my love. For that reason Adolph hates me. He is as jealous of me as a tiger-cat is of her cub.

"He did not appreciate Miss Killmer's goodness until I came. Since then he appoints himself her guardian. He has threatened me with bodily violence several times, if I did not refrain from paying attention to her. I could tell you of a thousand instances of petty spite and jealousy of this man, but I know that it would be of little interest to you. He went so far as to threaten Mrs. Killmer, that if she did not turn me out of her home, he would discharge Mary. Mrs. Killmer is a widow. The only income she has is that derived from taking in a few boarders and the salary Mary makes. Mrs. Killmer begged not to have to let me go, because she needed the money I gave her as a boarder. He compromised by agreeing to board with her, and he pays her well for his keep. Of course I had to find another boarding-place. Adolph could have a good home with Herman and his wife, if he wanted to, but he chooses to force me out and himself into the Killmer home.



Miss De Wolfe came into the room.

"You see how I stand here. If Adolph had his way, I would be at the bottom of the sea, anywhere out of his way. But I refuse to go. I'm going to stick it out! I wouldn't put it past Adolph if he had deliberately robbed himself in the hopes of fastening the guilt on me—that's the way I feel about the matter. I would no more dare to allow him to handle my account books and postal records that I would some convicted felon, because I know he would put it over on me if he could. When he says that I robbed him he lies, and he knows he lies! I wouldn't swear that he had been robbed."

Longman's sympathies were certainly with the young man. He had only been married recently and he knew how it would feel under the circumstances to have a rival in the affections of Mildred. You bet he would have fought for her!

During the period of his conversation, the closing time of the postoffice came. Miss Killmer closed the doors, put out all the lights not necessary for public use, counted up the stamps and other valuables, and had them piled on the table in the office ready for Barstow to put away. The young man took the valuables and put them in the safe, locked the safe and vault doors carefully. He escorted the young lady to the front door and kissed her good night. The lovers stood for a moment talking, then she departed.

"Where did you work before you got this position?" asked Longman, as the young man returned.

"The last place was Haynes' store in Lewiston."

"Did you have the postoffice there?"

"No, the postoffice there is a separate place. I was head clerk for Haynes."

"Did you live long in Lewiston?"

"Born there, lived there the largest part of my life. My father lost his life from the premature discharge of dynamite used in the blasting of some rock in a quarry in Bordenville. My mother died about three years, ago, heartbroken, I think, from the loss of my father."

The young man turned away his head and Longman thought he heard a suppressed sob. He saw the youth draw a handkerchief from his pocket and wipe his eyes.

"Excuse me, Longman," said the clerk, attempting to smile, "but the Barstows are a sentimental people. My mother was my best friend, and very near and dear to me."

"I should judge so," replied Longman, sympathetically; "you need not be ashamed of your tears. A mother's love is something to be appreciated; nothing to be ashamed of."

"Thank you for your sympathy."

"Pardon me, if I ask an abrupt question. But if you lost your job here, could you go back to Haynes' employ? You left him the best of friends?"

"Mr. Haynes was a good employer. But I would not want to go back. They don't pay much in the way of salaries in small country towns. Two dollars a day is considered quite a lot of money, and one must be at the head of the force to get that."

"And you were the head clerk?"

"Certainly. Grew up from errand boy. Finally had keys to the store, opened and closed the store."

"Of course you handled the money?"

"Oh, yes! I had the combination of the safe. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, merely to get at the gist of things. This is not your first responsible position?"

"No, I've handled a whole lot more money for Haynes than for Miller Brothers. Here I only handle the department money, though it goes into the same safe as Millers'."

"Have you been down to Lewiston lately?" asked the detective quietly.

"The last time I was down was some time in June. I went down to see a show. Wharton and De Wolfe were giving an entertainment.

Longman whistled.

CHAPTER X.

TANGLED THREADS.

"ARE you personally acquainted with Wharton or De Wolfe?" asked the detective, recovering his mental equilibrium.

"I have met them, or rather Wharton. He was here before he went to Lewiston. The actor had given a show in Bordenville or Kaslovia and came down here to make arrangements to show here. Miller Brothers own our theater. I did not close the deal, because he had a hunch that Lewiston would pay better. He left me some advertising matter and a couple of passes and I went down to see him."

"Ever meet him again?"

"He was up here again a couple of weeks after, so I understand. But nothing came of it. Miller wanted too much rent for his place. You know these people?"

"I have heard of them. They gave a show in Lewiston last night."

Longman did not think it necessary to say more on the subject. Very adroitly he had succeeded in verifying the fact that Wharton had been in Vaughnton about two weeks after the date of the Lewiston robbery. By referring to his memorandum, he was gratifyingly surprised to note that the date corresponded with the date of the Miller Brothers' robbery. This was a coincidence, to say the least. Longman made a note of it. The fact that Barstow was in Lewiston on the night of the Haynes' robbery was a coincidence also.

Summed up, Wharton and Barstow could be guilty, either one or both. To make Wharton guilty, it would be necessary to prove him an expert cracksman, one with a thorough knowledge of locks and safe combinations. No evidence had been advanced so far to demonstrate this.

To prove Barstow guilty would be an easier matter. He admitted that he had keys to Haynes' store, once. Did he have them now? It was presumed that he had access to Haynes' safe, had the combination. Had Haynes ever changed the combination, and did Barstow have it now? These were points to be verified. It was a known fact that Barstow had free access to every portion of the Miller store and, if so inclined, could have purloined the money. But how prove it? It don't look possible. A confession, or other criminating evidence, could alone solve the problem.

At any rate the two crimes, the Haynes and Miller robberies, were presumably connected. But not necessarily.

"To return to the case in hand, Barstow, have you any theory to advance as to the disappearance of your employers' money?" asked Longman, resolved to beat around the bush before asking too many personal questions.

"I have given it great thought," said the young man, soberly. "You know it must mean a whole lot to me to have this thing cleared up properly. As much

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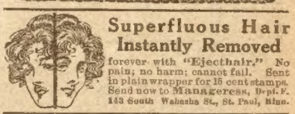

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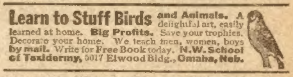

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as I detest working under the strained conditions here, I realize that it would be the height of folly for me to resign. Some one would misconstrue my actions and start a rumor that I was guilty, or at least forced to resign. So I must fight on for the sake of my good name and for the duty I owe to the little girl who has confidence in me and whom I intend to marry.

"This case is a peculiar one. It doesn't seem natural to me that a thief would go to the trouble and danger of entering this store, spending time opening a vault, and safe in the vault, and be satisfied to take only a portion of the money within his grasp. It is too absurd to contemplate such a case. To my mind a thief, or several thieves, after gaining entrance would take everything of value—money, stamps, silks, satins, everything that they could lay their hands on. That they did not, shows that it is not the work of burglars."

"Your idea and mine are very similar," agreed Longman. "That is the mysterious aspect of this case, as you say. Well, go on with your explanation."

"I am an inveterate reader," resumed Barstow. "I have read hundreds of stories, undoubtedly founded on facts, written by such writers as Oliver Optic, Alger, Gaboriau, Conan Doyle, Mrs. Sheldon and Charles Garvice, treating of love, jealousy, villainy and crime, and I know that underhanded work by jealous, discarded lovers is frequently the mode of procedure to win a lady's hand. 'All is fair in love and war,' is the standard of morality. I am satisfied that Adolph Miller is at the bottom of this robbery. He has taken the money in order to throw the blame on me. I have said this before and I reiterate it. And I have grounds for my belief, too."

"Explain yourself. You must know that you are making a serious charge."

"No more serious than the one that he makes against me. It resolves itself to the veracity of each of us. As I know that I am innocent, I can only feel that he is guilty. On the night of the robbery I was over to the Bon Ton barber shop, which you will notice is right across the street, and I saw Adolph enter the store. It was about nine o'clock in the evening. Of course he had a right to come and go as he pleased. When he accused me of taking the money, it made me so angry that I put in a counter-charge. I told him that I had seen him enter the store. He called me a liar. Said he had never been near the place. He proved to me, or rather tried to prove, that he had been over to the hotel having his teeth fixed. If he is innocent of the crime, isn't trying to put one over on me, why does he deny that he came back to the store? I can prove it by the barber. We both remarked that Adolph was getting very ambitious of late to work after every one else had quit."

"Perhaps the man you saw was not Adolph. Maybe it was Herman. Couldn't you be mistaken?"

"Impossible. Herman was out of town. Besides, Herman does not resemble Adolph in stature or build at all. Herman is thin and dark, Adolph heavy set and light. When he came out of the store after locking the door, he lit a match and touched it to his cigar. I am absolutely positive that it was Adolph."

"You are undoubtedly correct, it must have been Adolph. It doesn't prove anything, however, save that he doesn't want to admit to you that he came back to the store. Candidly, you think that there was no robbery committed, and that Adolph is putting up a job on you?"

"That's my candid opinion," responded the young man.

"It is possible that you are right," said Longman quietly, "and in such an event I would not be able to prove it, unless Adolph would admit your contention. You know how unreasonable it would be to suppose that he would confess after he has gone as far as he has in this matter. He thinks you are guilty. You think he is guilty. Let me strike a balance. Let me say that both are innocent—at any rate a robbery did take place. Then a third party enters the scene. It may be Herman—which is unreasonable—or it may be an unknown party. I am not going to say whom I suspect, but let me say for your sake that I have a very tangible clew. But whether I can gather sufficient threads to weave convincing proof or not remains to be seen. In the meantime you move along in the even tenor of your way. Things are bound to right themselves. The innocent will not be allowed to suffer for the guilty."

"Let us hope that you succeed in clearing up the mystery. Is that all you desire of me?"

"For tonight, unless you wish to make a confidant of me and tell me more of yourself."

"In what way? I have nothing to conceal."

"For instance, are you living within your income? Can you prove an alibi? Can you prove that you went right home after leaving the barber shop on the night of the robbery?"

"More of Adolph's insinuations!" exclaimed the young man, bitterly. "It worries him a whole lot how I came to give Miss Killmer a diamond ring. I suppose that he imagines I bought it with his money?"

"When I left Lewiston I had a savings account of about $200, saved out of my salary with Haynes. Since then I have sold the home my mother left me at her death. It was mine, because I kept it up after my father died. Despite the fact that it might look as if I were spending a whole lot of money on Miss Killmer, I am saving a little every month. It costs me but very little for clothes. I act as agent for a Chicago tailoring establishment and earn several suits a year. Even my education has cost me nothing. I won a course in a correspondence school and passed the examination for a postal clerk by studying at home evenings."

"Say no more," said Longman, grasping the young man's hand. "I believe you, Barstow. I don't think that you are guilty. You are of the stuff men are made of, and I am going to help you!"

"Thanks, officer. Those are the first words of encouragement I have had since my mother left me, outside of the cheer and faith expressed by the girl who is the innocent cause of Miller's dislike for me."

"See you in the morning," abruptly said Longman. The conversation was taking a painful turn to him.

Longman returned to the hotel. Taking some stationery and writing material up with him to his room, he wrote three short letters. One was to Mildred; one to Inspector Shea giving a resume of what he had accomplished to date; and one to Haynes asking that gentleman for his opinion of George Barstow, whether George ever had the combination of his safe, and if so, if the combination had ever been changed since the young man left his employ. In this last letter he asked for a reply by telegraph.

Longman took the letters downstairs and after buying stamps and stamping them, asked the clerk to see that they were forwarded on the midnight train.

The clerk handed Longman a note taken from his rack.

"You had your key with you," said the clerk, "or I should have delivered it to you sooner. I did not know that you had returned."

The detective read the message:

"Kindly grant me a private interview. May mean money to you.

"RENA DE WOLFE."

Here was a surprise for Longman. Rena De Wolfe in Vaughnton, and waiting to see him! He could guess her errand.

"Where is the woman now?" asked the detective.

"In her room. She left word for me to notify her when you arrived. Shall I do so? Some peach, I should say!"

"Believe me, there are some rotten peaches. Tell her I'll meet her in the reception-room."

"Sure! I'll send her to you."

Frank went upstairs to the waiting-room. It was deserted. Most of the guests had retired. In a few moments Miss De Wolfe came into the room. She was dressed in an opera dress with a fluffy feather boa thrown lightly over her bare shoulders. She held the train of her skirt in her left hand and thrown over her left arm. Her dainty ankles showed quite prominently from beneath the folds of her dress. Without knowing what kind of a game the artiste was going to play, Longman felt that a game of some kind was going to be played and he steeled himself against her woman's wiles. He knew she would bring all her arts to bear upon him. He knew that he would be less than human if he failed to fall for something. Frank rose at her entrance, and bowed. Despite his knowledge of her shortcomings, he could not but admire her beauty and self-possession.

"Keep your seat, Mr. Longman," she said in her musical voice, which was pitched low and tremulous. "You will pardon me if I seat myself beside you? What I have to say is quite confidential. I do not care to be overheard. I suppose that you are surprised to see me here, and wonder what it is I have to say to you," and she sat herself down beside him on the settee.

He moved as far away from her as the seat would permit. A delicate perfume filled the air, almost intoxicating him. He looked at her searchingly; she blushed slightly at his gaze of evident admiration. She sighed deeply.

"I am at a loss to know your errand," he said finally. "Of course it must be about Wharton."

"Sh!" she said, in well-simulated alarm, laying a dainty hand upon Frank's arm. "Please don't mention any names. I registered under an assumed name, and don't want to cause scandal. Can't we retire to my boudoir where we can have a little privacy?"

"Wouldn't that be a little indiscreet?"

"Why?" she asked very innocently. "Aren't you to be trusted?"

"It's against all hotel rules for a young lady to receive gentlemen callers in her private room."

"What do I care! My motives are innocent. I am here for a purpose, and mean to accomplish it."

"Now my dear Miss——"

"'Irene Sinclair' will do as well as any other name," she added quickly.

"Then my dear 'Miss Sinclair' what you ask is impossible. I've been around this world too much to be caught with the 'Badger Game.' You are a very lovely woman; but I know you are a very wise woman, also."

"You wrong me. If I were as wise as you give me credit for, would I be mixed up with—ah! with 'Frank Howe'? I don't know what you mean by the 'Badger Game.'"

"Oh! Yes you do! I will not gratify you by explaining myself further. If you have nothing further to say here, let me terminate this interview. I don't see what you can want of me, anyhow."

"If you are afraid to go into my room, you wise and cruel man, I am not afraid to go into yours. You can have no objection to that? I have something very important to say to you. Believe me it will be to your interest."

"I don't think it will, 'Irene.' You cannot bribe me not to appear against 'Frank Howe.' No use trying!"

"You don't know my proposition. I hate to talk here where we can be seen and overheard. After you hear what I have to say you will be glad that I did not blurt out everything!"

Several people came through the reception hall on their way to their respective rooms during the conversation. It certainly was not a very private place. All stared questioningly and went out of their way to get a glimpse of Rena.

"What's your room number?" she asked.

"Number 8," he answered.

"Mine's number 7; must be right across the way. Go down to your room; I'll follow you"

Frank went into his room, leaving the door ajar. A moment or so afterward Rena went into her room, then from there came into his.

"Better leave the door open," suggested Longman.

She shook her head, and deliberately locked the door on the inside.

"How much will you take to refuse to prosecute Wharton?" she asked abruptly.

"I told you that I would not be bribed," he answered.

"Have you anything personal against me."

"Nothing. Though I know that you are his accomplice in many things."

"Thanks for your consideration." She took a seat near Frank and gazed at him intently. The reflection of the gas light made her eyes sparkle and glow with excitement. Frank felt their influence, and half regretted that he had allowed her to talk to him at all.

"What have you personally against my partner, Mr. Wharton?"

"Not a thing, personally," said Frank. "I'm 'agin' him because he is a crook.'

"Suppose that I should say that he is not guilty of stealing Smithson's wallet—that I took it? You wouldn't want me to be sent over the road, would you?" She attempted to put her arm around his neck.

He gently but firmly pushed her away from him.

"Keep your hands to yourself, please!" he said. "If you are guilty you should make reparation. I know that Wharton did not actually steal the book. I know you did, but you gave it to him, and he knows you stole it."

"No, I didn't steal it, Mr. Longman. I'll tell you all about it. After we got on the train and secured seats, Mr. Wharton left me, as you know, and went into the smoker. While he was away Smithson, whom I met personally in Lewiston, came over and sat alongside of me. He wasn't averse to flirting with me as you are, you ice-cold man!"

"See what he lost! More's the reason I should not allow myself to flirt with you. You have your object in view. Light-fingered and loose-moraled women usually do."

She flushed indignantly at the insinuation.

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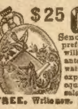

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"Well, I didn't steal his pocketbook! I found it on the seat after he left!"

"Hardly an alibi, Miss De Wolfe. You knew he owned the wallet, and turned the purse over to Wharton, who, after abstracting its contents, threw it from the train. This much I know positively, because I saw it done."

"Can't we compromise the case somehow? I have offered to make the monetary loss good, and this is satisfactory to Smithson."

"Oh, is it?" said Frank, nettled by her ogling, nagging manner. "Well, it's not satisfactory to me. If this was the only case I had against him it would be different. He is too dangerous a man to be at liberty. I am not sure but what you are just as dangerous only in a different way."

"What do you mean that you have a different case against him?" she asked in a surprised and defiant tone.

"You need not express ignorance. Where was Wharton on June 9th?"

"We gave a show in Lewiston."

"Then what?"

"I went home to the hotel. Ralph had a poker game on afterwards."

"Is that all? How much money did he tell you that he made?"

"What are you trying to do, pump me?" she demanded suspiciously.

Frank shrugged his shoulders. "You can do as you please. I don't need your assistance. I know this much; after he left the game—when did he get home in the morning?"

"I don't know; I was asleep."

"Did he tell you what he had done after he had quit the card game?" He was very quiet and collected.

"I don't know what you are talking about. You seem to imply something. Has he been doing something he should not?"

"You know he has. And I know it, too."

"Say, you are not a yap detective, are you?"

"If by 'yap' you mean country—no. I'm a special man sent down from Chicago."

"I thought you knew too much for a ruralite. I am almost sorry I did not let Wharton kill you! You know too much!"

"You ought to be glad that you didn't, you little tiger-cat! Wharton would have been a candidate for the noose, not simply one for the rock-pile. My movements are pretty well known. My chief knows whom I am shadowing. Two and two make four, you know. Don't you think that you had better turn State's evidence?"

"What do you want me to confess? He never robbed or murdered a man that I know of."

"Think again!"

"I don't know a thing about it.

"Remember, Miss De Wolfe, I have had consideration for you because you are a woman. But if you are not considerate enough of yourself to admit what is apparent, I can only proceed against you as an accomplice. You know what Wharton did in Lewiston—whom he robbed?'

"You mean Haynes and the bunch of kid poker players?"

"Certainly I mean Haynes! I knew you knew all about it!"

"He can't be arrested for that! They were all gambling."

"You know I don't mean young Haynes at the card table—I mean the father, whose safe he opened."

"Never heard of the man before. You mean to say there was a robbery, and that Wharton did it?"

"That's just what I mean. And not one, but two; not two, but three! You see, I know. You might just as well admit it."

"My God!" she exclaimed. "I always knew that it would end this way!" And she sobbed heartbrokenly.

"Confess, and I will try and make it easy for you," replied the detective, who really felt sorry for the misguided woman.

"I have nothing to confess! You know it all! You know more than I do, in fact."

"Think it over, Miss De Wolfe. See

(Continued on page sixteen.)

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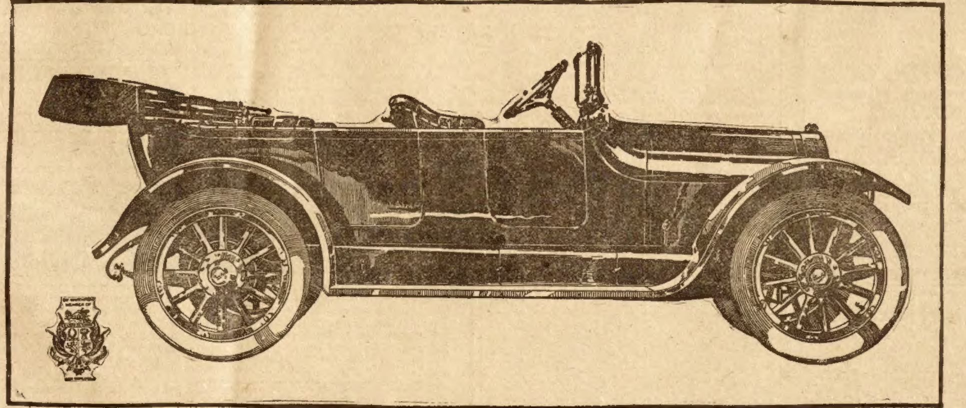

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OUT WEST STORIES

A Quick-Fire Marriage

By William AlfredCorey

"REMINDS me of how I got my wife," the little man said, with a reminiscent smile playing about his time-marked features.

We were, the half-dozen of us, looking through the car window at a long, sagging, rusted steel rail that spanned a deep chasm to the south of the track and some distance below. Except for a few broken, rotten ties and broken timbers far below, and suggestions of the companion rail at either end, it was all that was left at that point of the old cog-wheeled railroad that once worked its winding, laborious way up Mount San Antonio, long before the building of the modern electric road. It made one think of the broken gun carriages and debris of an old battlefield; one of the battlefields of man's long war against nature.

"So?" I said, looking quickly from the steel cobweb far down the mountain to the little man in the seat back of me. "So? How's that? Tell us about it."

"Second it! Second the motion," came in a chorus from the others. "Let's have the story."

There had been a dirt slide or something on the track ahead of us and the train was delayed. But the mountain sunshine, streaming in through the car windows, was glorious, the silent grandeur of the great hills was all about, the smoking car was comfortable, and now if a good story could be uncorked—some yarn with the ring of romance and adventure in it—nobody cared when the old train reached Squirrel Tavern up at the Summit. The six of us were total strangers to each other, and yet, in a moment, without passport or quibble, we came into that happy democracy that occasion brings.

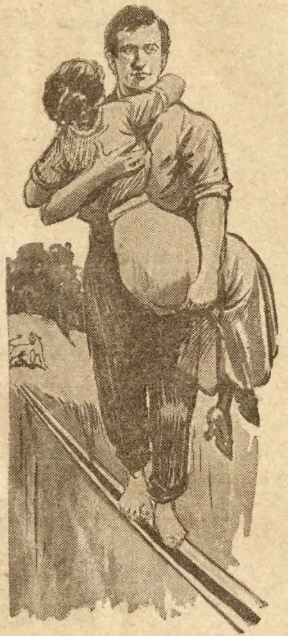
The little man, with the twinkle of pleasant memories in his eye, settled himself in his car seat and began loading his pipe for a smoke. "Have a cigar," he begged, finding several in an inside coat pocket and proffering them about. "I smoke a pipe, but I always carry a few cigars with me for my friends."

We thanked him, lighted up, and began filling the compartment with haze, like blue mountain vistas, and waiting for the story to begin.

After puffing in silence a few moments the little man spoke. "My courtship and marriage took just about ten minutes," he said. "I had never seen my wife above ten minutes before I married her, nor she me. Neither of us knew the other's name, even, until we stood before the preacher who married us." That sounded good as a starter, and we all bent forward.

"But don't think this was any marriage - in - haste - and - repent - at-leisure business," he warned us. "Or any quick-fire elopment with a divorce kick-back. No, sir! The story I'm telling you happened thirty years ago, and Mary's up at the Tavern now, waiting for me. See these gray hairs? I've got a son heavier'n you, sir." And he estimated my two hundred pounds with his eye as I stood smoking in the aisle.

"Thirty years ago I was a cook in a resort hotel at Aubert's Camp over in the San Bernardino Mountains. There was a deep chasm near the hotel that was crossed by a sagging rail of an old, abandoned narrow-gauge track, for all the world like that down yonder. Well, I had athletic ambitions in those days." (The compact, lithe figure, in spite of the close-cropped, gray beard and the thin gray hair, bore this out, all right.)



All thought of fear left me.

"I wanted to be a tight-rope or high-wire performer, and, amateur-like, I practiced walking that suspension bridge rail until it ceased to be even interesting, and I longed for more worlds. The hotel and resort people kept a small menagerie, including a lion or two, and various attractions for the amusement of the guests on the other side of this canyon, probably a mile from the hotel itself. The young fellow in charge of this animal show, Billy Sims—Billy afterward went to Alaska—was a chum of mine, and, instead of going around by a perfectly safe mountain road and footbridge, I was in the habit of short-cutting it across this rail when off duty, and visiting Billy and the other animals.

"As I say, I walked the rail until it ceased to amuse. I walked it forward and backward, with and without a balancing pole, and carried all sorts of burdens across it for the entertainment of the other hotel help, and sometimes guests, too, who stood on the mountain-side and watched me. I invented feats until I began to feel myself out of the amateur class and quite professional. In fact, I was industriously saving my wages against trying myself out as a real performer. I was full of ideas. I thought of nothing else. I didn't know as much about love as a fish does, and girls didn't come within my ken. In short, to perform on the tight wire, travel with some show, and pull down big money was the height and depth and length and breadth of my ambition.

"But one day Mary Goodman came into my life like a letter from home with money in it, and she's been a part of it ever since. It was all on account of Congo, the male lion. Congo got mad one day, put Billy out of the game with a broken shoulder, leaped through the cage door over his keeper's body, and escaped to the spruce timber on that side of the canyon.

"Mary was over there at the time and alone. She was a guest at the hotel with her father and mother, rich tourists from the East. She was naturally adventurous and daring, and liked to take long hikes about the hills, armed with nothing deadlier than some brushes and canvas. Well, the lion soon made it known at the hotel that he was at liberty and didn't care who knew it. The noise he made was blood-curdling, and with it came the news that a girl was over there and in danger.

"I was one of the first to see her, standing terror-stricken and paralyzed with fright at the very brink of the rocks that walled the precipice on that side, and I knew the party of armed horseman that was organized to go around by the road and wagon bridge—fully four miles—would never reach her in time.

"So I stripped off everything but trousers and shirt, and went after that girl across the sagging steel rail. It was a feat I had never attempted before, nor anything like it, and it promised to be as difficult as it was unexpected. But it was a case of life and death, and it was up to me to do my best. It didn't take above two minutes to rush down to the hotel side of the chasm and cover the fifty feet of rail bridging it. It was going back with a woman in my arms and under the breathless gaze of a fast-gathering crowd on the hotel side and with an awful sense of responsibility, that was to be the test.

"But the instant I reached her and looked in her eyes I felt encouraged. For I knew she had nerve and common sense. I saw it in her eyes. The fact that she weighed less than a hundred pounds was a minor advantage. The main thing was her courage—she wasn't the hysterical kind.

"'Now,' I said to her, 'I'll carry you across in perfect safety if you'll shut your eyes, keep still, make yourself perfectly limp and trust me—do you understand?—trust me! Don't move a muscle or make a sound, only trust me. Will you do it?'

"She said she would, and we started. The feat would have been nothing for a professional, with the fairly steady, broad steel rail and a comparatively light burden. But mind you, I was only an amateur in those days, and I had never performed in public, much less faced a terrible responsibility. But I was strong as a young bull, and never in my life up to that hour had I known the sensation of fear. So I braced my muscles like a mechanism of iron, concentrated my mind on my task and with my burden firmly grasped in my arms, planted my bare feet firmly on the rail and began taking step after step out, out, over the abyss below.

"I had not gone five careful, measured steps when a strange thing happened. Right there and then, with the girl's and my own life at stake, with her parents and others on the hotel side holding their breath in agony and turning their eyes away in sheer horror, and with the roar of that lion in the woods back of us, with death below and death behind, I fell in love. Queer time and place to fall in love, wasn't it? But right there and then I fell in love with that girl. I had never seen her before and didn't even know her name. But when I felt her obeying me so exactly, and when I saw her closed eyes and the smile of supreme courage and supreme

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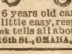

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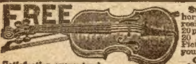

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confidence in her upturned face and felt her courage oozing out of every pore in her body and welling up through me, I vowed to myself then and there that I would save her and marry her though all the chasms of the world should yawn below or between us.

"With the coming of that feeling of love and divine purpose all thought of fear left me I felt buoyed up and happy as though pinioned on wings. I forgot the deadly sense of responsibility and suspense. I heard voices of angels in my soul rather than the hoarse roar of the lion behind me. I forgot the jagged rocks far below. I saw only a radiant vision of happiness ahead, and the narrow, rusted steel rail became a shining pathway leading me to it.

"We reached the hotel side in safety, and when I put Mary gently down she didn't do a thing but throw her arms around my neck and kiss me and whisper, 'I love you,' in my ear.

"Then came more surprises in rapid-fire succession. I intended to marry the girl, sometime, somewhere, after there had been introductions and preparations and a courtship and all that sort of thing. But before I knew it her father, amid the excitement, had seized me by the hand and said, 'All right, my boy, I withdraw my objections. You've won her. She's yours.' And then Mary pulled me to one side and dragged me past the crowd, and inside of five minutes by the watch we were standing before a preacher guest of the hotel and being sworn in as man and wife. Mary lost no time in explaining to me that her father, being near-sighted and excited, had mistaken me for a guy who had been bothering her and importuning him, and that she had married me at once so as to escape the other fellow. And as we were both sure we wanted each other, why wait?

"Sure? Too hasty a courtship? We lived ages in crossing that chasm. And while we didn't know each other's names, and all that, we had looked into each other's souls in those awful seconds, and each saw—well, anyway, we felt pretty well acquainted.

"Her father, the rich old guy, got mad when he saw the mistake he had made, and disinherited her, and she learned rope-walking, and we traveled together on the road for years. Then he repented, left her a wad, and we quit the road and settled down. Now isn't that some—Ah! There goes the whistle, and I guess we're off again."

A half-hour or so later the train arrived at the Tavern and we saw, coming down from the hotel, a fine young giant with a motherly little old woman on his arm, who waved her handkerchief to the story teller in the car. She looked as though she had just stepped out of a romance, and just the woman to trust a man—a true man—with her life, and then marry him before he could bat an eye.

Next week's Ledger will contain another Out West Story, entitled, "Fly Smith's Waterloo," a funny story of a Western election. Keep in touch with these stories; you will find them good ones.

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Anchored.

"You are not very happy in this house," friends remarked to the renter.

"No, I can't say we are."

"Your ceilings are falling."

"They are, and that isn't all. Our roof leaks, our cellar fills with water every time it rains, our radiators thump, our furnace is too small for the house, its appetite is too large for our income, our gutters have rusted away, the porch sags, the house hasn't had a new coat of paint for seven years, the wall paper hangs loose in every room, and the chimney is shorter after every windstorm."

"Why in the world don't you move?"

"Because we can't find another house with a hall that our long Oriental runner will fit."

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Read the display advertisements as well as the classified or small want advertisements in this issue of the CHICAGO LEDGER. You may learn something from them that you want to know.

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Diabetes no longer need be a terror to those who have become afflicted with this dread disease.

As the result of extensive experiments, physicians announce that a simple herb, growing wild in Mexico, long known for its high medical value, has the merits [illegible] specific gravity and sugar in D[illegible], besides [illegible] vigor and b[illegible]ing up the s[illegible].

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Tell your afflicted friends of this offer and send 10c today for a full sized 50c package. AMES CHEMICAL CO., Box 106-K, Whitney Point, N. Y.

JEALOUSY

"Who is that out on the front porch with Mary?" belligerently inquired Sanddinger as he entered the family living-room.

"Why, I thought I heard Mary introducing you when you came up," Mrs. Sanddinger said in some surprise. "It's a new young man ——"

"Oh, I know he's new and his name is Biffkirk, and he's got fuzz on his cheeks like a gosling!" interrupted Sanddinger, with hostility. "I'd like to know what he's doing around here, that's all!"

"Why, he's calling on Mary," protested Mrs. Sanddinger. "He's perfectly nice and there isn't any reason why he shouldn't call. What makes you act so, Samuel?"

"How do you know he's nice?" demanded her husband. "I tell you, the carelessness of the modern parent is something awful! Here you sit calmly crocheting and allowing your daughter to entertain out on the front porch an utterly strange young man——"

"My goodness, Samuel!" said his wife. "He's not utterly strange! Harry Thompson introduced him in the first place, and his mother is a second cousin of Harry Thompson's father."

"Harry Thompson!" breathed Sanddinger, dilating his nostrils and glaring at his wife as though he had detected her in the act of poisoning the family. "Who is Harry Thompson that you should take his word as gospel law in conducting the affairs of this household? I've never liked the way his eyes are set, anyhow, and the way his father acted in that lawsuit was enough to stamp the whole Thompson family as——"

"Why, I've heard you praising up Harry many a time!" protested Mrs. Sanddinger, in surprise. "You always said he was such a nice boy when he'd come over with messages from his mother."

"Well, that was ten years ago," said Sanddinger. "When he was a mere child. You can't tell at all how a boy is going to turn out when he's 13 and wears a floppy tie and a saintlike look. I've had my suspicions of Harry Thompson ever since he's been hanging around so much the last few years. I wouldn't trust him around the block. Why, I wouldn't be surprised to hear that Harry Thompson had absconded with all the bank's funds, leaving a trail of weeping widows and orphans behind him! I don't believe he's above it at all!"

"I certainly am surprised!" said Mrs. Sanddinger. "Harry has always been like one of the family! He has perfect manners, and is so jolly, and he's not a bit sentimental over Mary! They're just good friends who've grown up together!"

"Don't tell me!" said Sanddinger, darkly. "If he doesn't persuade her to elope right from under your nose you may count yourself in luck! You'll have no one but yourself to blame! Unless this Piff-Biffkirk fellow gets in ahead of him! Why, that fellow had a look in his eyes when I came up the steps that——"

"Now, Samuel!" protested Mrs. Sanddinger. "I must say I think you are decidely peevish and unjust! I don't see why you should act so, all of a sudden!"

"That's right! Attack me because I take an interest in my own family and wish to forestall elopements and unhappy marriages! Anyhow, I won't have these young idiots putting wedding ideas in Mary's head! She's too young for such nonsense! I won't have it, and I'm surprised that you, her mother, should be so negligent and shortsighted."

"Do you know how old Mary is?" demanded her mother. "Twenty her last birthday!"

"Twenty!" scoffed Sanddinger. "That's a mere child! There are entirely too many young men hanging around here! I've been going to speak about that young Hinkle for some time. He always acts as though he supposed I was glad to see him—gives me a handshake that a promoter might use when planning to steal your eye teeth! I don't like his style! And this Miff-Piff-Biffkirk—I'm going right out now and call Mary in! She can send him home——"

"Samuel," said Mrs. Sanddinger, in cool, clear tones, "you sit right where you are! I've just decided what's the matter with you! Most fathers are that way. I know mine was. The trouble with you is that you're just plain jealous! That's it! You're jealous for fear Mary will like some of them better than she does you! And she will—you can bank on that! So you might as well swallow your medicine gracefully and retire to a back seat! They're all perfectly fine fellows, and you're simply jealous!"

"I'm not!" growled Sanddinger, sinking back into his chair. "The idea! Say, it's fierce having a daughter grow up!"

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Honest.

"Gentlemen, I can't lie about the horse; he is blind in one eye," said the auctioneer.

The horse was soon knocked down to a citizen, who had been greatly struck by the auctioneer's honesty, and after paying for the horse he said:

"You were honest enough to tell me that this animal was blind in one eye. Is there any other defect?"

"Yes, sir, there is. He is also blind in the other eye," was the prompt reply.

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The Marlborough

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THE MARLBOROUGH. Fur fabric coats have held the attention of designers this season to as great an extent as have the genuine furs. This model is made of Silky Astrachan Cloth, carefully handled to obtain slender, graceful lines. It has roll collar and turn-back cuffs of lustrous Seal Plush. Closes with three large Plush Buttons and Silk Loops. Length 48 inches. Lined throughout with good quality of Sateen. In black, navy blue or brown Astrachan Cloth, trimmed with Seal Plush. Sizes 32 to 44. State color and size. No. 920A97. Prepaid **$5.98**

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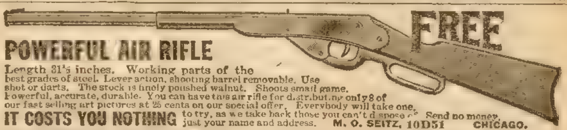

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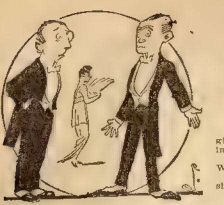
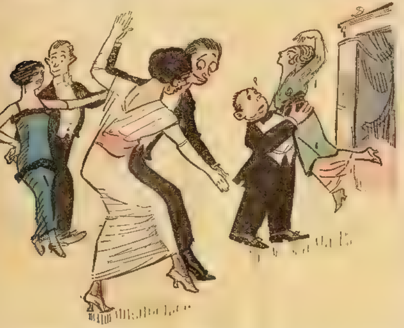


Binks—"Oh, I guess your rich aunt will remember you! You made a big hit with her by going into mourning when her cat died!"

Jinks—"True, but listen; now the other relatives accuse me of poisoning the cat to get the opportunity."



He—"Some one told me that I was decidedly handsome"
She—"When was that?"
He—"Yesterday."
She—"No, I mean, when were you handsome?"

A Little Darling's Discovery.

Professor—Some of the grandest inventions of the age have been the result of accidental discoveries'

Young Lady—"I can readily believe it. Why, I made an important discovery myself, and it was the purest accident, too."

"I should much like to hear it."

"Why, I found that by keeping a bottle of ink handy, a fountain pen can be used just the same as any other pen - without any of the bother and muss of filling it."

■

Wrong.

"Have you anything to say before sentence is pronounced against you?" asked the judge.

"The only thing I'm kickin' about," answered the convicted burglar, "is bein' identified by a man that kep his head under the bedclothes the whole time. That's wrong"—Puck.

WISE.

A man who lives in our town
Thought he was wondrous wise;
He jumped into a business,
But wouldn't advertise.

And when he found his business gone,
He tried a method sane;
He started in to advertise,
And got it back again.

❧

Relieved.

Grace (age 6)—"Mamma, cud a little girl as little as me be arrested for playing suffragette and breaking a window?"

Her Mother—"No, dear; certainly not! Why do you ask?"

Grace (relieved and gleeful)—"Oh, I shud worry"

❧

He Had One.

"I'm introducing a brand new invention—a combined talking machine, carpet sweeper and letter opener,' said the agent, stepping into an office

"Got one already," answered the proprietor. "I'm married"

Oh, Doctor!

Little Clarence—"Paw!"

Mr. Callipers—"Well, my son?"

Little Clarence—"Paw, when a doctor is sick and calls in another doctor to doctor him, is the doctor doctored the way he wants to be doctored, or does the doctor doctor him just as he thinks he ought to be doctored?"

❧

A Director.

"They tell me that Jim Muggins is one of the directors in a big city corporation now," said the grocer

"Yes, I seen him las' time I was down to town," said Mr. Meddergrass. "He directs envelopes f'r the firm."

❧

Rather Unsatisfactory.

Husband—"Does that new novel turn out happily?"

Wife—"It doesn't say. It only says they were married."

Named for Two Presidents.

When Uncle Rod, the old colored man who worked about the place, came one morning Mrs. Stone said:

"Well, Uncle Rod, I hear you have another pair of twins at your house."

"Yaas, missus," responded the man, "we has. Bress dey little hearts!"

"Have you named them yet?" asked the woman

"Yas'm," said Rod. "Done named 'em aftah two ob de fust Pres'dents ob dis country.

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Stone. "Which two?"

"Ole Christofo C'lumbus an' Juleyous Caesar," said the man. "We's great on namin' de chillun fo' de Pres'dents 't our house."

❧

Rabbits Were Out of Season.

Uncle Jim Sugarfoot killed a fine rabbit for the entertainment of Parson Heavegrace, who was expected to dinner, but as rabbits were out of season he thought to avoid what might prove an embarrassing situation by making the parson think it was chicken.

"Brother Heavegrace," said Uncle Jim, when it came time for a second helping, "what paht of de bird would you like now?"

With a merry twinkle in his half-closed eyes Parson Heavegrace replied·

'If you all don' mind Ah think Ah'll take de gizzard."

❧

Not Easily Discouraged.

Mrs. Suburbs—"Do you still receive that dreadful Mrs. Comealwus at your home?"

Mrs. Tiptop—"Impossible to get her to take a hint. Do you know, when she called I never offered her a chair'

Mrs. Suburbs—"And what was the result?"

Mrs. Tiptop—"Result? Why, the next time she came she brought a folding camp-stool with her."

❧

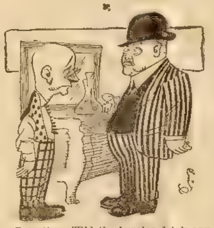
Perhaps.

"And what do you propose to do now, William?" asked his father of the son who had just come home after graduation at college

"Oh," yawned the optimistic young man, "I think I'll go over to New York and look for a position at $5,000 per—you understand? At $5,000 per."

"Oh, yes," said the old man. "I understand. You mean at $5,000 perhaps!"

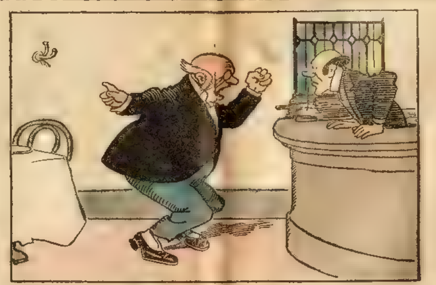
❧



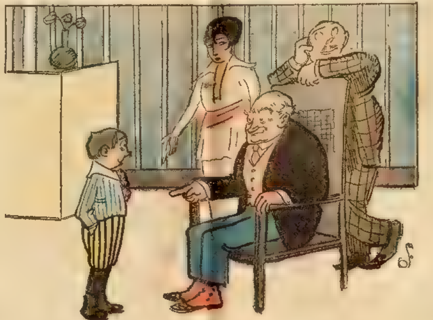
Detective—"Did the burglar drink any of the liquor on the sideboard?"

Householder—"No; the liquor was not disturbed!"

Detective—"Ah, ha! That's Big Ike Dugan He's married to a suffragette and dasn't go home with his breath smelling!'



Diner (in restaurant)—"Somebody's stole me hat, overcoat and wallet!"
Cashier "Well, you can leave the rest of your clothes as security for the meal you've eaten!"



"How did you do in your examination, Jean?"
"O, I answered all the questions, grandpa."
"How did you answer them?"
"I said I didn't know!"

Telling the Truth.

Mother—"Now, Willy, you told me a falsehood. Do you know what happens to little boys who tell falsehoods?"

Willy (sheepishly)—"No, ma'am."

Mother—"Why, a big black man with only one eye in the center of his forehead comes along and flies with him up to the moon and makes him pick sticks for the balance of his life. Now, you will never tell a falsehood again, will you? It is awfully wicked."—Puck.

Ruling Passion.

Madge—"Have you given up golf for good, my dear?"

Marjorie—"I really couldn't say. I might take it up again if they leveled off the links so one could tango after the ball."—Puck.

Tainted Money.

With a roar like a gigantic rocket the 100 horsepower motor car tore down the road. Joe and Mike saw it disappear in a cloud of dust. They suddenly came across the trail and held their noses.

"Thim motors must cost a heap of money,' said Joe; "the rich is fairly burning money

"Ay, indeed sniffed Mike, "and be the smell of it. It must be that tainted money we hear so much talk about."

Not Worth It.

"So you saw the woman drop her purse," said Mr. Marks to his friend, "but lost her in the crowd. Did you advertise?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Parks, "but I didn't get an answer. I put this in the papers 'If the plain woman about forty-five years of age wearing a dress and a hat of last year's style who lost a purse containing $3 50 on Twenty-second street on Saturday will apply to——, the property will be returned.'"

"Good heavens, man!" said Mr. Marks. "No wonder you didn't get an answer. No woman in the world would own up to that description for $3.50."

■

Choosing a Head.

In the early days printers in most newspaper offices supplied the headlines for the items they put in type. Henry Cary tells a story of a man in a Milwaukee composing-room who had a paragraph he did not understand

He went over to the foreman and showed him the item

"How'll I head this?" he asked.

"Oh," said the foreman, "head it appropriately. Don't bother me with such questions."

So the next morning the item appeared "Appropriately!"

❧

She Wondered.

"Fred, do you remember where you were in 1910?" asked the bride of a few months

"Why, no, dear, I don't remember exactly," replied the young husband. "Why do you ask?"

"Why, I was reading today in the paper that it is said that in 1910 one person in every 800 in the United States was in prison."

❧

He Refused.

An American visiting London for the first time, goaded to desperation by the incessant necessity for tips, entered the washroom of his hotel, only to be faced with a large sign which read: "Please tip the basin after using

'I'm hanged if I will!" said the Yankee, turning on his heel. "I'll go dirty first.'

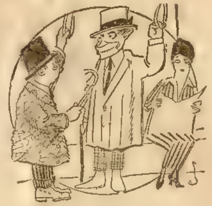
■

The Best Place.

A stranger visiting a church at a little village on the Scottish coast inquired of the verger where he might sit.

"Weel, sir," whispered the verger, cautiously, "I must tell you there's an awfu' lot o' visitors in the village just now, and ye'd best sit whaur ye can see yer umbrella."

❧



[illegible]—Did you have many duplicates among your wedding gifts?

[illegible]—"Six cream pitchers, four parlor lamps and twins a year later!"

A Lay Brother.

A school-teacher was reading a story to a class of very small folks, and paused at the words "lay brother' to explain their meaning

"Does any one know what 'lay brother' means?" she asked

For a moment a row of perplexed little faces looked up at her. Then one face brightened suddenly and a small voice piped. "Yes, ma'am—it's a rooster."

❧

More Work for Congress.

Grouchy Voter—"I think Congress ought to quit sending out seeds to us farmers.'

Congressman (visiting in his district)—"Why, aren't the seeds good?"

Voter—"Oh, yes, the seeds are all right, but I think Congress ought to plant the seeds and send us the vegetables."

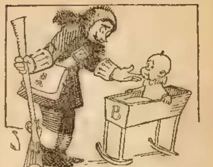
❧

Couldn't Wait Until Then.

"Ma," began Rugger, junior, trying for the sixth time to say something

"Tommy," she replied, sternly, "didn't I tell you not to interrupt Mrs. Cackle and me? Wait until we have finished."

"But, ma, I want to say this today!"



Daddy Bunting—"Bye, Baby Bunting! Daddy's going hunting to get a little rabbit skin to wrap the Baby Bunting in."

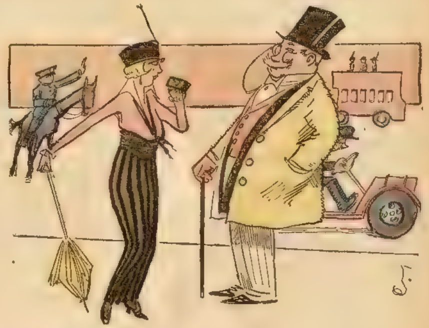
Baby Bunting—"Nix on that rabbit skin stuff. If you can't come across with sable or seal don't talk furs to me."

❧

A Natural Question.

Domestic—"Ooo! Ooo! Ooo' I saw a ghost on the back stairs! I'm sure I did! It was a woman!"

Mistress—"Horrors! How was she dressed?"



"And how is your health now, uncle?"
"Bad, bad! It's my nerves! Even in church I can't sleep any more'

A Mean Meaning.

Wifey—"Do you recollect that once when we had a quarrel I said you were just as mean as you could be?"

Hubby—"Yes, dear."

Wifey—"Oh, Tom, how little did I know you then!"

■

A Love Match.

Friend—'Edith married for money, didn't she?'

Clara—"No, indeed. He is rich, but she is dreadfully in love with him. Why, when he comes in late, she just sits and scolds him by the hour"

❧

Seeing and Feeling.

Tommy—"Yes, cats can see in the dark, and so can Ethel, 'cause when Mr. Wright walked into the parlor, where she was sittin' all alone in the dark, I heard her say to him: 'Why, Arthur, Arthur, you didn't get shaved today!'"

The Wrong Train.

As the train was moving out of a Scotch station, a man in one of the compartments noticed that the porter, in whose charge he had given his luggage, had not put it into the van, and so shouted to him and said: "Hi! you old fool! What do you mean by not putting my luggage in the van?"

To which the porter replied: "Eh, man! yer luggage is ne'er such a fool as yersel'. Yer i' the wrang train!'

■

Too Great Speed.

Mr. Dumm had just strolled into Glumm's office.

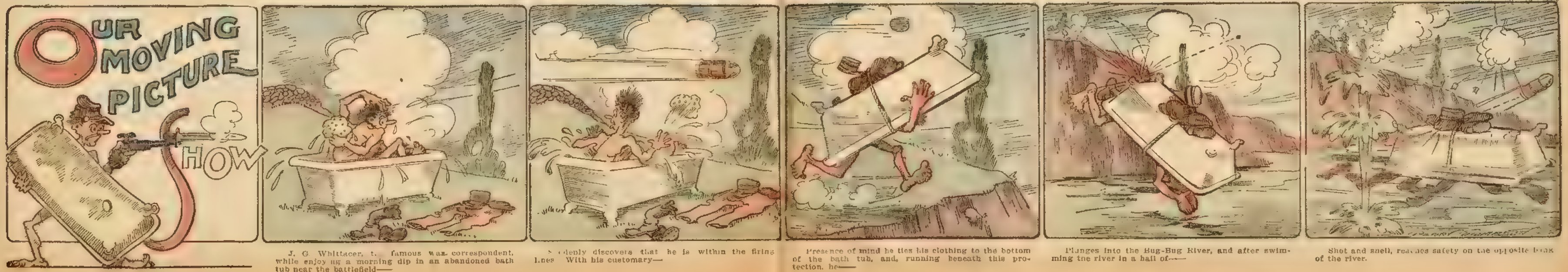
"Why did you discharge your stenographer?" asked Dumm.

"She was too fast for me," replied Glumm

"Too fast?" exclaimed Dumm.

"Yes," replied Glumm. "Her speed was thirty mistakes per minute."

HE GOT VERY BUSY



J. G. Whittacer, the famous war correspondent, while enjoying a morning dip in an abandoned bath tub near the battlefield——

Suddenly discovers that he is within the firing lines With his customary—

Presence of mind he ties his clothing to the bottom of the bath tub, and, running beneath this protection, he——

Plunges into the Bug-Bug River, and after swimming the river in a hail of——

Shot and shell, reaches safety on the opposite bank of the river.

Red Dick O'Laughlin

Or, THE CHIHUAHUA TRAIL

By Stephen Gaillard, Author of "Frontivard, the Terrible"

(Copyright 1914 by W. D. Boyce Co.)

Begun in No. 36, September 5. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHEN HOPE WAS DEAD.

AN HOUR later Trevelyan, Virginia and O'Laughlin, with Palmer and half a dozen of the band, stood about a newly-made grave in the little garden where the remains of the priest had been laid. At its head was a rude cross made of two pieces of wood, tied together.

"I owe him that," Red Dick had said, "even though my own corpse may soon lie unburied."

Near the last resting place of the priest were the graves of the others of the band who had fallen in the fight.

When O'Laughlin and Palmer had communicated the news of their ghastly find and the tragic discovery which had followed it, the men had received it with grim stoicism. Death had so long been their familiar companion that it held little terror for them.

"Well," said Tilford, looking up from beside one of the wounded men, who had just breathed his last, "we've cost Butcher Villa dear already, and we'll cost him dearer before he gets us."

'They'll starve us out," said Hurtbut; "we've only food for two days at the most; it would be better to make a sortie and die fighting in the open than to be starved in here like rats in a trap."

A dozen voices echoed the stern sentiment.

"But the women," said Red Dick, "what of the women?"

"Good God, yes, the women!"

From beyond the walls came the frequent cracking of rifle shots—Villa's men sniping from behind the walls of the houses in which they were concealed. The Catamount's men replied to them from the iron-barred windows of the monastery; overhead the moon, standing high in the heavens, shone coldly down upon the group in the courtyard.

Looking around upon the circle of stern faces, Trevelyan spoke huskily: "Boys," he said, "you have done all that men could do, but the end is certain whether it comes now, or in an hour, or a day; therefore I say to you, ride out and sell your lives as dearly as you may, and leave me here with my daughter and this poor girl; we will know how to die."

Gestures of stern dissent greeted his words. "Not one step out of here will I go," said O'Laughlin, "and leave you to your fate."

The other men in the grim circle seemed about to voice the same sentiments, when Virginia stepped forward from where she had been engaged in readjusting the bandage on the arm of one of the wounded men.

"My friends," she said in a clear sweet voice, standing between her father and Red Dick, into whose hands she placed her own, "I know what you are all about to say, but hear me first: My father was right when he said I knew how to die, but it will not be within these walls, sacrificing you, who have so bravely fought for me, to the slow misery of starvation, only to be taken at last, perhaps, when, weakened by hunger, you are able to resist no longer; no, we will all sally forth together, and as I have said before, I say again now; as none of you I know will be taken alive, no more will I."

A stern murmur of applause ran around the circle. Billy Trevelyan drew his daughter closer to his side. "My brave, brave girl!" he whispered. Red Dick pressed hard the little hand that was not withdrawn from his.

"You have spoken like Trevelyan's daughter, Miss," said Catamount Palmer with flashing eyes. "And now, my friends, when shall we make the sortie?"

"My vote is for just before dawn," said Beddoe, "unless they should try another assault before that."

There was not a dissenting voice.

"We have ten wounded men," said Palmer—two of the wounded had died within an hour after the fight in the courtyard—"but they are strong enough to ride with us in one last charge."

"Yes, yes," came in eager assent from the wounded men, "we'll mount and ride with you; don't leave us here for the greaser cutthroats!"

When the group stood beside the graves of their comrades and the priest, all preparations for the last desperate sortie had been made. A scanty supply of forage had been found unspoiled in a loft above what had once been the stable of the monastery, and the horses had been fed; the wounded were given doses of brandy at short intervals to keep up their strength, and to the dead the last earthly service had been rendered.

"He was a man of peace, a godly man," said Red Dick, looking down at the priest's grave, "yet the cutthroats murdered him."

"Aye," said Palmer, "and the man of peace sleeps his last sleep beside the men of war, and our battle shout will be his requiem mass."

As he spoke he leaned with one hand against the wall, close beside which the priest's grave had been made. At the slight pressure of his hand the huge stone against which he leaned began to move and he sprang away with a startled exclamation.

"Ha! what! I could have sworn the wall was giving away!"

"No, no!" exclaimed Red Dick, looking eagerly at the stone, which had turned in its place until it was several inches out of line with the others. "By Heaven! it is the entrance to the secret passage!" Springing forward, he threw his weight against the stone. Slowly it turned upon its hidden pivot until before their eager eyes was disclosed the black opening of the secret way which meant for them another chance of safety.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUT AND AWAY.

IT WAS midnight. On both sides the desultory firing had gradually ceased, and the moon shone down serenely upon the deserted town and the beleaguered monastery, which had witnessed so much of war's grim tragedy. Out of the blankets and equipment of the captured horses several rude horse-litters had been constructed for such of the wounded men as could not ride for long. All of the horses, and many of the men, had been gathered in the inner courtyard. Every preparation had been made for flight, and Palmer was about to recall the last of the band from their posts at the iron-barred windows when, from the side towards the gate through which they had entered, came the crack of a rifle, followed by a straggling volley which merged into a continuous and steady fire from the monastery side, and by savage yells and a furious fusillade from the Mexicans.

Realizing that the firing at the western gate might only be a feint, Palmer and Red Dick hastily sent men to reenforce other points against which a sudden attack might be made in an attempt to surprise them, while they themselves, with Trevelyan, leaving only a few men to care for the horses, rushed off to see what the sudden renewal of the assault might portend. Through a barred wicket in the gate they could see that the wall of the outer courtyard and the windows of the houses across the street beyond were literally aflame with the rifle fire that blazed from them; while across the courtyard itself came a group of men bearing a heavy timber like a battering ram. With splendid courage the forlorn hope rushed forward; four or five of those bearing the timber fell, but others took their places; they covered half the distance to the gate; but the Catamount's men, unmindful of the fusillade, which was meant to cover the bold attempt, concentrated their whole fire upon them; they hesitated, wavered, dropped the timber and fled. Above the cracking of the rifles and the shouts of the Mexicans, the watchers at the gate could hear Villa's voice bellowing imprecations upon his retreating men.

"The brute!" muttered Red Dick, "he is cursing gallant men."

"Why don't he come himself," growled Trevelyan, "he's the man I want to see."

As if in answer to his words, the fusillade, which had slackened somewhat, was redoubled, and another group rushed into the courtyard. They were led by Villa and Bandera. On they came, their ranks decimated by the fire that was poured into them, but they reached the timber where it had fallen, lifted it and rushed on. Man after man fell beneath the timber, but others stepped into their places, while their leaders urged them on by voice and example. They were almost at the gate—almost; but they were falling thick and fast, and mortal men could endure no more. They hesitated for one brief instant. The foremost man, he upon whose shoulder the end of the timber rested, fell. Colonel Bandera sprang forward to take his place, shouting: "Forward, my braves! one effort more and we'll have the Gringo dogs!" They were the Colonel's last words. A bullet struck him in the forehead and he pitched forward headlong. The remnant behind him dropped the timber and fled, followed by Pancho Villa—who seemed to bear a charmed life—hatless, powder-grimed, blaspheming.

"By Heaven!" said Palmer, "if they try again they'll reach the gate."

"Not with that piece of timber," said Red Dick, lifting the bar by which the massive portal was secured.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to get their battering ram. Stand ready to close the gate when I come in."

Before Palmer or Trevelyan could have uttered a word of protest—even if they would have uttered any—he was in the courtyard and, lifting the heavy beam, was staggering with it beneath the archway, while the bullets pattered like hail against the walls about him and kicked up the dust at his feet. Calling upon his men to follow him, Villa led a rush across the courtyard in an endeavor to reach the portal before it could be closed. Too late! The portal was shut in their very faces and they were driven back. In five minutes the courtyard was deserted, save for more than two-score dead and wounded with which its stones were strewn.

On the southern side Fierro had led an equally gallant and equally futile attempt upon a door leading into a narrow lane, which Villa probably had hoped he would find unguarded. But Tilford was there with ten men, and when Fierro retreated the lane was like a shambles.

Palmer gave orders that the desultory fire which the enemy kept up for some time should not be returned, and gradually it died away and ceased altogether.

The band, their preparations for flight

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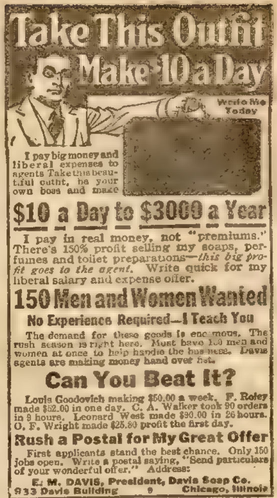

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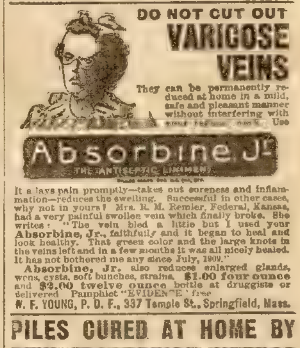

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all complete, gathered in the courtyard. Red Dick went first with half a dozen men to open the iron door leading into the ravine and to see that the coast was clear; Tilford with a dozen men formed the rear guard. It was perhaps two hours after midnight when Palmer with the main body joined Red Dick at the mouth of the ravine where they had first met. A few moments later Tilford joined them, having closed the entrance to the underground passage behind him; and the band threaded its way across the plain to the shelter of the timber. No shot, or shout, or sound of pursuit interrupted them. Villa was too sure he had them irrevocably bottled up in the old monastery to be watching the plain. Once out of sight and sound of the town, they turned northward at a steady trot, guided by Red Dick towards the crevasse in the canyon wall, up which he had escaped from Mercado's men. Down it the men led their horses to the trail where he had skirmished with retreating Federals upon an afternoon that somehow seemed very long ago. Thence they rode out into the desert plain which stretched northward and eastward from the foot of the plateau upon which stood the town of Santiago de los Caballeros.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LAST FIGHT.

TWO days later the moon, tending to its setting, looked down upon three bodies of horse which were converging upon a point where the hills meet the Rio Grande twenty miles below Ojinaga. One of the bands, coming from the south, were Catamount Palmer's men, weary, spent with hard riding, with four wounded men in the rudely constructed horse-litters, who moaned and swore at the roughness of the way, while of six other wounded men, two, babbling deliriously, were held in their saddles by comrades. It was a sorry enough looking cavalcade, and yet there was about it a something fierce and grim that might well have given pause to any who should wish to bar its way. Yet that was exactly what seemed about to happen. From right and left, up and down the river, came two other columns, headed, whether knowingly or not, to intercept the Catamount's men.

The column coming up the river was a mere handful—fifteen men at most—trotting swiftly along, laughing, chatting, yet watchful, while that which came down the river consisted of over a hundred horse, with front and rear guard, advancing at a steady trot, and in equally high though less boisterous spirits. At their head rode Colonel Maximo Merida of the Constitutionalist army, with a couple of subordinate officers beside him. The ground they were traversing was a strip of level land between the hills and the river; and as he rode the Colonel kept a keen eye upon the hills.

"They are about due' at the river now," he was saying, "and it is somewhere near here that we should meet them."

"But, my Colonel," said one of the officers at his side, "suppose they should have already crossed?"

"Impossible, Captain, our scouts along the river would have brought us word of it. No, no, they have not reached the river yet, and doubtless at this moment they are bivouacked somewhere among these hills. We are approaching a trail now which is little known, save to men like this Catamount Palmer's fellows, and if we do not meet them there I shall turn inland, divide the men into small parties, and search for their bivouac. I must have them if I have to sweep the hills with a broom to find them."

"Is this Catamount Palmer of such importance, then, my Colonel?"

'Of enough importance for a man to kill his horse bringing me General Villa's orders from the nearest telegraph station. Ha! Santa Maria! there they are now!" The Colonel pointed as he spoke to a trail a quarter of a mile ahead, which intersected the one they were on. Sure enough, down from a hollow between the hills, came Catamount Palmer's men. They were nearer the river than the Mexicans were to them—half again as near—but their horses were spent with days of hard marching, while those of the Mexicans were fresh, and it was soon apparent that the latter would intercept them before they could reach the river bank.

Colonel Merida, galloping at the head of his men, shouted joyfully, "We've got them! we've got them!" and turned in the saddle to urge on his men. Just then Captain Rodriguez, riding at his side, called out, "Look, look, my Colonel! What are they doing?"

"Santa Maria!" exclaimed the Colonel, looking around; "I believe they are going to charge us."

This is what had happened: Red Dick and Catamount Palmer, riding with Virginia and her father, at the head of their column, had seen the Mexican cavalry at the same moment when, issuing from the hollow between the hills, they had come in view of the river.

"Sewed up again," said Red Dick as he looked at the rapidly advancing column, "very neatly sewed up. Catamount, I think we are going to have another fight."

"Yes, and we are little fit for it," said Palmer, "and worse fit to fly."

"I tell you what," said Red Dick, "Trevelyan here shall take twenty men, with Virginia and Nancy and the wounded, and ride straight for the river; once there they will have to plunge in and swim for it, four of the men taking each a man from the litters up behind him while four others hold them on the horses; as for ourselves and the rest of the men, we will ride alongside and to the left of Trevelyan's column, and when we are within striking distance we'll charge the bunch of greasers yonder."

"Good!" said Palmer. "I think it is the only way," and Trevelyan and the others who were near gave ready assent. Quickly rearranging the column according to Red Dick's plan, they dashed on with what speed the horses could muster.

The exclamation of Captain Rodriguez was the first intimation the Mexicans had of what was about to happen, and almost before Colonel Merida's answer was out of his mouth, the Catamount's men had wheeled their horses to the left and charged with a yell, while Trevelyan's column dashed forward towards the river, now scarcely two hundred yards away.

The Mexicans had no time to form into line, and in the first fury of the onset Colonel Merida went down before Catamount Palmer's revolver and his column doubled up and reeled back from the shock. But the Mexicans were four to one, and Captain Rodriguez, a gallant officer, rallied them and pressed the Americans back towards the river. The fight was sanguinary and desperate, the issue a foregone conclusion. It even seemed doubtful if Red Dick and Palmer would gain their object—the escape of Trevelyan and his party. But even while the contest was raging, along the trail which Merida had been following, but from an opposite direction, came the party of fifteen, unnoted by either side. They, too, were headed for the trail leading down from the hills and to the crossing of the river, which was here more practicable than elsewhere. At their head rode a tall, lean old man, with fierce white mustaches. He was a white man. He looked like a Spaniard. At the noise of the fighting he sat more erect in his saddle, if that were possible, and his nostrils quivered.

"Boys," he said in English with a strong Spanish accent, turning to his men, "they are fighting for the crossing of the river. Ha! see, one party is covering the escape of another. Come on, let's see who they are, and if there are any of the damned Carranzistas mixed up in it we'll take a hand ourselves," and he put spurs to his horse, followed by his men.

They came up just as Trevelyan's little column was preparing to plunge into the river. Trevelyan was in the rear with Virginia by his side. As the old Spaniard saw him he exclaimed: "By my life! the Senor Trevelyan.' Is it possible?"

"Good God! Ruy Gomez!" exclaimed Trevelyan, equally astonished.

"And who are those yonder, Senor?" said Ruy Gomez.

"Your manager, Red Dick O'Laughlin, Catamount Palmer, and a band of Americans. Charge those greasers, Ruy Gomez! Charge them! and the surprise will make them show the yellow that is in them."

Thus it happened that at the very moment the Mexicans were pressing Palmer and Red Dick most hotly, they were charged by a new and unexpected foe—Ruy Gomez and fifteen American cowboys from the Hacienda de Toros—and, having already all the fight upon their hands that they cared to handle, they broke and fled pell-mell back towards Ojinaga.

What is left to tell is not at all exciting. When explanations were made on the Texas side of the Rio Grande, it appeared that the Hacienda de Toros had been burned and looted by Guitierrez, by Villa's orders; but Ruy Gomez, the foreman, and the American cowboys had escaped, bearing with them certain bags of golden pesos—a hundred thousand—of which the hiding place had been known only to Red Dick and Ruy Gomez.

Ten miles from the river the fugi-

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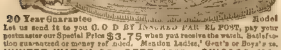

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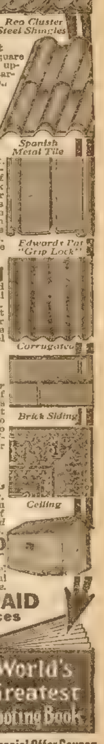

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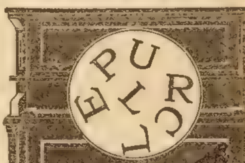

tives were met by Captain Sandy MacPherson of the Texas rangers, who, being well known to Catamount Palmer as well as to Red Dick and Trevelyan, welcomed them heartily, had their wounded cared for—none of whom died, by the way—and made no difficulties about the manner of their entrance into God's country. Neither did he choose to see when, the following night, the Catamount and his men rode quietly out of camp and back across the river. Trevelyan and Red Dick urged him not to go, urged him to forget and begin life anew; but in vain; he and his followers had suffered wrongs that sear men's souls, and still thirsted for revenge. But that is another story, as is also a whirlwind wooing and a wedding in San Antonio a month later, at which Red Dick was the groom and Billy Trevelyan gave away the pretty bride.

P. S.—Nancy has completely revised her views as to the appearance of bandits and thinks her mistress' husband is the noblest man alive; an opinion in which her mistress fully concurs.

The End.

* * *

A Triple Mystery

(Continued from page nine.)

me in the morning and I will try and make it easy for you." He opened the door and gently led her from the room.

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"Well, Jimmy," said the patient, when the boy came to report, "what did they say?"

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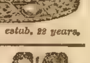

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TIME.

HE.

Do they measure time where thou art,
Sweetheart, sweetheart?
Do the moments come and go,
And the hours, haply, flow,
And the days drift soft and slow?
Does time pass?

Or, Father Time beguiling
With your smiling,
Do you stay the flying year,
With its blessings and its cheer,
And make age disappear,
Lovely lass?

SHE.

Nay, time we do not measure,
That fair treasure!
But we know that it doth pass
By the cost of rent and gas;
If you doubt it you're—alas!—
Well, a goose!

As a thrifty modern hero
You are zero!
If the flight of time you doubt
Watch my stock of clothes wear out—
There! I've put that man to rout!
What's the use?

* * *

REAL TROUBLE

Mrs. Whittingham squeezed lemon into her husband's second glass of iced tea. "George," she began abruptly, "I'm perfectly sure that those Youngmarrys across the street have had a dreadful quarrel."

Whittingham knew that he might as well have it over with.

"Now, Genevieve," he answered, "you're always suspecting something. But what makes you think they have had a misunderstanding?"

"You know how much they always seemed to think of each other," she said, "and how they always seemed to be such —ah——"

"Billers and cooers."

"Yes, that's it exactly. Well, this morning, after you had gone, she came out on the porch as usual and got into the swing. In a little while he came out, too, and he never once offered to kiss her good-by, which is something he never before failed to do. He seemed so stiff and straight, and he simply marched right down the steps and away up the street without looking back once. I never saw it happen before. He always kisses her good-by in plain sight of all the neighbors, and he always kissed her first thing when he reached home in the evening."

"Why," said Whittingham, "I came home with him this evening, and——"

"You needn't tell me that you didn't notice anything amiss," interrupted Mrs. Whittingham. "I know you didn't. Men never do. But what I noticed only confirms what you call my suspicions."

"After you left him at the steps you didn't look back. But I watched and Mr. Youngmarry marched right up and into the house with his face straight in front of him—as dignified and cold and unbending as a ramrod. Mrs. Youngmarry appeared to smile a little half-ashamed smile, and she got right up and followed him inside.

"And then while you were working in the garden Mrs. Youngmarry called little Jimmy Monson and sent him hurrying off to the drug store. I inquired of Jimmy what it was that Mrs. Youngmarry asked him to get, and Jimmy said he couldn't remember the name, but that the bottle had a skull and crossbones on it.

"I think it's perfectly dreadful for a romance as sweet as that one to end so. And such young married folks, too!"

"Well, my dear," said Whittingham, "you see——"

"Now, there's no excuse for it at all," went on Mrs. Whittingham, emphatically. "I'm sure they haven't been married a year, and here they are quarreling like cats and dogs. To think of their not kissing good-by! I wouldn't be surprised if she took that poison she sent Jimmy Monson after! I'm all excited over it. I'm waiting every minute to see the ambulance rush up to their door and carry out her poor dead body! Men are such heartless things, and I think that something ought to be done before it's too late. I thought maybe Mr. Youngmarry said something to you about it on the way home—men are apt to tell one another their troubles."

"He did," responded Whittingham.

"And you've let me worry all this time! George, that's downright mean of you! I don't see why you couldn't tell me."

"I've been trying to tell you for ten minutes. Youngmarry did not kiss his wife this morning, as you observed, and I know that he walks stiff as a poker. That is because he has a large pet boil on the back of his neck. The poison that Jimmy Monson purchased was nothing but a little iodine I advised him to paint it with. And so your terrible tragedy is not going to be pulled off this evening!"

"Oh," breathed Mrs. Whittingham. I'm sure that's too bad!"

* * *

Guesses.

"I have the most exasperating children in the world!" declared Mrs Switzler to her husband. "I sent them over to the German woman's to ask her if she could come and do some cleaning for me tomorrow. They came back in due time and I asked them if they saw her, and they said yes.

"I proceeded to inquire if they had asked her if she could come tomorrow and they said they had. Then I endeavored to find out what the woman had said and they replied that they didn't know. She gave them an answer, but they couldn't understand her meaning and so they said 'All right,' and came back home."

"The children figured," replied Switzler, soothingly, "that they had made a response that would work either way—all right if she could come and all right if she couldn't. Or did you wish them to argue the point with her?

"When I was learning telegraphy," continued Switzler, "I didn't know half the time what I was hearing, and what the dots and dashes signified. When I didn't know what the other party on the wire had said I would manipulate the key in a way that signified laughter. I took it that there was a bare chance that there might be a witticism in the words of the speaker.

"Once the train dispatcher said to me on the wire: 'Stick around closer than you have been doing lately. The main guy is on the way, and I want a quick report from you.'

"I gave him the laugh and nearly got fired.

"Women do the same thing. If they don't catch what a person is trying to tell them, they say, 'Eh-heh,' yes,' and if it doesn't turn out to have been a joke, it isn't their fault.

"When people don't understand what we say they are better off. If I ever get haled into court I am going to pretend to be a Chinese and employ a Chinese interpreter.

"If we could only talk through interpreters all the time how much easier this life would be! There is entirely too much conversation in the world. With interpreters it is 'yes' and 'no,' and thus we keep out of jail."

* * *

THEIR RULES.

They all sat round in friendly chat
Discussing mostly this and that,
And a hat.

Until a neighbor's wayward lad
Was seen to act in ways quite bad;
Oh, 'twas sad!

One thought she knew what must be done
With every child beneath the sun—
She had none.

And ere her yarn had been quite spun
Another's theories were begun—
She had one.

The third was not so sure she knew,
But thus and so she thought she'd do—
She had two.

The next one added, "Let me see:
These things work out so differently."
She had three.

The fifth drew on her wisdom store
And said, "I'd have to think it o'er."
She had four.

And then one sighed, "I don't contrive
Fixed rules for boys, they're too alive."
She had five.

"I know it leaves one in a fix,
This straightening of crooked sticks."
She had six.

And one declared, "There's no rule giv'n,
But do your best and trust to heav'n!"
She had sev'n.

* * *

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Chicago Ledger

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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Troubles of most men are feminine.

The best thing to do is to do your best.

Success comes to some men in spite of themselves.

Money is a man's greatest trouble if he hasn't any.

Wisdom is what others suspect that you don't know.

A man isn't necessarily honest because he is poor.

Better a penny in the hand than a nickel in the slot.

Every time a man tries to show off something gets his goat.

Don't pose as a specialist unless you are qualified for the job.

Some men would never water their lawns if all flesh were grass.

Riches have wings—otherwise there would be but few high flyers.

Never judge the age of women or eggs by outward appearances.

Time never hangs heavy on the hands of a boy with his first watch.

Better a woman with rosy cheeks than a man with a rosy nose.

Many a benedict is an ex-bachelor who was overtaken by a widow.

Women can see through each other, and yet they are not all slender.

Some people tell the truth because they can't think of a suitable lie.

Opportunity knocks but once—but it's different with the human knocker.

Ever notice how much easier it is to buy experience than it is to sell it?

Experience comes high, but you needn't tell the world what it cost.

Cupid is wise. He leads the couple to the altar and then quits the game.

Some men are up with the lark and some others prefer a swallow before breakfast.

It's an easy matter to fill teeth—all you have to do is kick a savage dog and then wait a little.

By keeping our face closed today we shall have no occasion to offer an apology tomorrow.

It costs some people a lot to live because their neighbors are afflicted with the borrowing habit.

From the fruit dealer we get our jams—and from the wet goods dealer we get our jimjams.

Many a man makes a strenuous effort to recognize his duty so that he will be in a position to dodge it.

PEPPERS

Two of a Kind.

In a town many miles from Bath a tramp was brought befor the judge for vagrancy and stealing rides on the cars. The case was presented to the court in due form and the judge asked the tramp if he had anything to say in his own behalf.

"Yes, Judge, I have," replied the wayfarer.

"Let's have it, then," replied the judge

"Your Honor," stated the prisoner, "over in Bangor I have a sick wife and a family of small children, and I have a letter from my wife asking me to come home, and that is the reason for my beating my way."

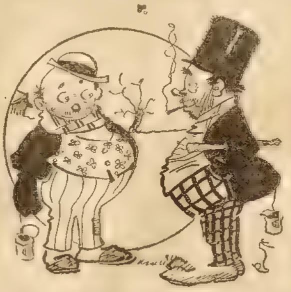
"I believe you are lying," said the court. "I myself have a letter from your wife, telling me that you are a worthless fellow and that she does not wish ever to see you again."

The tramp at this brightened perceptibly.

"Your Honor, we're both of us lying, for I have no wife," said he.

"Get out of this," ordered the judge, laughing as the tramp hiked away

❧



Perry Pathetic—"Don't you wish you had so much money you had to scoop it up wit' a shovel?"

Felix Hawstead—"Aw, shovelin' is too much like work."

❧

Surprised Them.

"A pleasant surprise," said Senator Frawley of New York apropos of a charge that had been exploded against a brother legislator. "A pleasant surprise, indeed. It reminds me of Smith.

"A half-dozen of us sat gossiping in the club one afternoon when Smith entered.

"'Oh, dear me!' I groaned. 'Here's Smith. Here's Smith, just back from a three months' European tour. He's going to bore us to death with travel talk. I see it in his eye.'

"Smith, sure enough, came straight toward us. He sat down, lighted a cigar, beamed on us all and said:

"'Well, boys, how goes it? I've just returned from a three months' European tour——'

"We groaned.

"'And I want you to tell me every blessed thing that's happened since I've been away.'"

■

Of Two Evils.

The little boy in this story was evidently a firm believer in the old adage, "Of two evils choose the less." Turning a corner at full speed he collided with the minister.

"Where are you running to, my little man?" asked the minister, when he had regained his breath.

"Home!" panted the boy. "Ma's going to spank me."

"What!" gasped the astonished minister. "Are you eager to have your mother spank you that you run home so fast?"

"No," shouted the boy over his shoulder as he resumed his homeward flight, "but if I don't get there before pa, he'll do it!"

❧

The Anti.

D. Lyman Abbott, an eloquent antisuffragist, said at a dinner in New York

"I am convinced that, despite all this sex equality talk, woman in her heart still longs to look up to man in reverence.

"A diplomat at a dinner in Washington took down the season's belle.

"'You ravish all hearts,' the diplomat said to her. 'You make a fresh conquest every week.'

"'True,' said the belle, and sighed. 'True—and I'd give all my slaves for one master.'"

■

A Poor Excuse.

Uncle Joe Cannon, in a recent political argument, said:

"That excuse is not good enough. It reminds me of a Danville bartender. He came to work in a Danville bar and as soon as he arrived the receipts began to diminish. The boss at the end of the week said to the newcomer:

"'Look here, do you take money out of the till?'

"'Oh, no, sir,' said the bartender. 'No, indeed, sir.'

"'Now,' said the boss, 'you must be taking money. I know it.'

"'Of course,' said the man, 'I take out my car fare every night.'

"'Oh, you do, eh?' said the boss. 'And where do you live? In San Francisco?'"

❧

Universal Confidant.

Some time ago a salesman happened in a small back country town and was surprised at the warmth of the fight over the local postoffice appointment.

"Look here, Jake," remarked the wondering salesman to an acquaintance, "the whole town seems to be wildly excited over this postoffice business. It isn't a job that pays much money, is it?"

"No," answered Jake, "it don't pay hardly any money at all."

"Well, if that's the case then," returned the salesman, "why is it that everybody takes such a great interest in the thing?"

"It's just this way, pard," explained the native. "Most of us are particular who reads our postal cards."

❧

Willing to Oblige.

Not long ago a young couple came in from the suburbs to New York City. They arrived very early and decided to have a lunch. They visited a tea room and had the place all to themselves.

In serving them the waitress omitted to supply a teaspoon, and the fair young bride whispered the fact to her husband.

Summoning the waitress, the young man asked:

"May we have a spoon?"

"Why, certainly," replied the girl. "I am just tidying up, and you can have the whole room to yourselves in a minute or two."

❧

Seemed Too Familiar.

Mr. Peet, a rather diffident man, was unable to prevent himself from being introduced one evening to a fascinating young lady who, misunderstanding his name, constantly addressed him as Mr. Peters, much to the gentleman's distress. Finally summoning courage, he bashfully but earnestly remonstrated:

"Oh, don't call me Peters; call me Peet!"

"Ah, but I don't know you well enough, Mr. Peters," said the young lady, blushing, as she playfully withdrew behind her fan.

❧

Gallant.

John D. Rockefeller Jr. tells a story of his father.

"Father tells many stories. Sometimes he tells a new one. Not long ago he related one to me that concerned a man who had imbibed rather too freely. The man, in this condition, fell into a watering trough. To the officer who came to help him out as he wallowed in the water he said:

"'Offzer, ken save self. You save women an' shildern.'"

❧

A Serious Case.

Wife—"You must send me away for my health at once. I am going into a decline."

Husband—"My! My! What makes you think so?"

Wife—"All my dresses are beginning to feel comfortable."

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RING TO RIDGEPOLE

A Boy's Struggle to Become the World's Greatest Circus Performer

[Copyright 1914 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

By John Miller Gregory

CHAPTER I.

BERT KINGDON measured the distance from a horizontal bar to a mattress made of straw stuffed into oat sacks, which lay on the floor of his father's barn, spat on his hands and went determinedly back to the bar from which he had just fallen.

"I'm going to do that trick if it takes all week," he muttered. "Then," he added, "when I do it with one somersault, I'm going to do it with two."

He rubbed his hands with magnesia, looked again at the mattress, took a short run, and began to swing himself on the bar. When he had reached the height of the half-circle made by his body in the air, he let go, doubled into a knot, turned completely over and came down on his feet. For a minute he stood as if dazed, looking first at the bar, then at the mattress and back to the bar again. As he realized that he had actually accomplished what he had been trying for three weeks to do, a grin overspread his freckled face, he raised one foot in the air and kicked out vigorously, snapped his fingers, and looking up to the roof of the barn ejaculated, "Now, by hunky, what do you know about that?"

Bert Kingdon was circus mad. He was the son of the village preacher, and from the gossip of the townspeople was predestined to eternal damnation. He could not remember the time when he had not been held up as the horrible example to younger and older boys, and when, as occasionally happened, a circus came to town, and Bert each time he openly disobeyed the determined injunctions of his father and carried water for the horses or sneaked into the tent under the flapping side-wall, the villagers were delighted that these things only bore out their predictions that Bert was following the footsteps of thousands of other good minister's children on the broad highway which leads to destruction.

In the estimation of broader-minded people Bert was not and had never been what his critics designated as a bad young fellow. These friends of Bert's looked upon him as possessing perhaps more of the joy of living than the other boys of the village. When Bert, in his exuberance of good health and energy, turned handsprings on the church lawn, they regarded it as more childish than criminal, and when the parishioners were scandalized at his rigging up a tight wire from his bedroom window to a nearby tree, they laughed among themselves and said that Bert didn't stand nearly as much chance of losing his soul as he did of breaking his neck if he attempted to walk it.

If Bert had ever entertained any hopes of joining a circus, he kept them locked in his bosom as a secret too sacred for public dissemination. Occasionally his mother would find him rubbing his muscles vigorously with goose grease, but he always explained his action by saying he was sore from stacking hay, and his good mother, who secretly admired her well-set-up boy more than she dared admit, would let it go at that.

Bert was nineteen when he succeeded in doing his first double somersault from his parallel bar. His practice necessarily had to be in secret, and this retarded his rapid advancement, but the years of work in the barn had made him an excellent gymnast. He had mastered a good many tricks that even the circus performers would have been proud to do. His very ignorance of the work forced him to invention, and if he had known the little arts of style which go so far to make the success of a circus act, he could have put on a creditable twenty-minute performance.

After the first joy of accomplishment had passed, when he dropped feet foremost instead of on his back as he usually did from his bar, Bert sat down to figure out exactly how he had done the trick. He found that chiefly it resulted from his own confidence in himself; in his freedom from fear that he wouldn't do it and from his calmness and determination when he threw himself out from the bar into the air.

"Gee," he ejaculated, "it's dead easy! I'd a done it a year ago if I hadn't been afraid."

He grasped his bar again, swung into the air, pumped several times vigorously and again doubling himself into a knot, turned a clean double somersault and landed right side up with strength to spare. As he hit the mattress a gruff voice spoke from the doorway

"You're all right, kid. Where'd you get that stuff?"

He looked up to find a red-faced man in what were originally white overalls, staring at him in admiration. The man carried a bucket of paste in one hand and a roll of posters in the other. A cigarette hung from one corner of his mouth and a cap perched recklessly on the side of his red head.

"I was just practicin' it," said Bert. "Did you see me do it?"

"Did I see you?" The man's voice held that quality which bespeaks open admiration and scorn that he should have missed such a sight. "Say, if the old man saw you pull that stunt, he'd join you out. We got a lot of four-flushers with this show that can't do nothin' but benders and crabs."

"What's a bender and a crab?" Bert asked in awe at the stranger's vocabulary.

"Them's the things you do when you're afraid to get in the air. It's kid's stuff, see? It's what the wimmen do when they stall in the big acts to make it look like there's a bunch of performers workin'."

"Are you with a circus, and is it coming here?" Bert flung out the questions as if his life depended on an affirmative answer.

"Sure I'm with a show. Did you think I was tackin' tobacco signs? I'm with the bill-postin' crew of car No. 1 of the Stark show. It's the best two-ringed show on the road, and Charley Stark, the owner, is one white guy, all right, all right."

He seemed struck by a sudden thought. "Say, how'd you like to see the show?"

"I'm afraid," Bert gasped at the suddenness of the question. "My pa's the minister. I ran off last year and saw a circus and he licked me for it. I dasn't."

"I'll tell you what I'll I do," said the stranger. "You let me put up some paper on this barn and I'll give you a couple of good seats. Then you can go and your pa won't know nothing about it."

"He'll find out. The deacons 'll tell him. They always have to go, so they can tell the folks at church about the evils of circus-going."

"I wouldn't mind if he'd just fuss at me," went on Bert, "but I ain't going to let him lick me again. When he hit me I got so mad I come pretty near hitting him back. I'm afraid of what I'll do if he tried it again."

"That's all right, kid. You see you don't know nothing about this paper, see?" I'm putting these here orders on this box, and you go on up to the house and don't come back for a couple of hours. Then the stuff might be up and it might not. Anyway you won't know nothing about it."

"The man laid the yellow slips on the box and turned away with his paste-brush and paper. For a minute Bert was tempted to call him back, then his eye fell on the yellow tickets, and grasping them in his hand he rushed out of the barn toward the house.

CHAPTER II.

BERT was awake and out of the house at sun-up on circus day, but early as he was, the streets were alive with jolting circus wagons and strange, roughly clad, red-faced men who moved in a continuous procession in one direction. Calder's lot, across town from the railroad station, was the usual circus grounds. Calder himself was a deacon in Bert's father's church, and Bert wondered, as he hurried on, if it was not immoral to rent a place for the circus to show, if the circus itself was immoral. He was too carried away by distant sounds from the circus grounds to worry himself much about moral problems.

He wanted to get to the grounds in time to see the center pole raised and watch the canvas men spread over it the huge canvas. It had always been a mystery to him how they raised the dome of the tent, it seems so bulky and heavy and it was such a marvelous thing to get the great spread of cloth to stay in the air, especially when the wind blew.

When he got to the circus lot he found that one tent was already up, while several small tents, like magic, sprang off the ground as he watched Soon there arose a clatter of dishes and the shouts of cooks and cook-house men, and Bert thought this must be where the circus people ate. He went over to investigate and found a thoroughly equipped kitchen, with a huge range in a wagon and several cooks in white aprons and caps busily engaged in frying pancakes and boiling pots of coffee. One of them called to him and asked him to bring a bucket of water, and Bert, proud to lend assistance, rushed off and brought it back, slopping the water over the sides in his hurry lest he arrive too late.

The cook thanked him and pointed to a young man standing in the center of the lot surrounded by several canvas men. "Go over there and tell that young fellow I sent you," said the cook; "he wants to see you."

Bert dashed off, wondering what the man could want with him. Breathlessly he gave his message and was surprised when the young fellow burst into a roar of laughter. "Gee, Carney's the kidder," he said; "I didn't want you, it was Harry." He pointed to a rough, huge fellow who was giving directions in a voice that sounded as if it came through a megaphone. Bert rushed away to offer his services to the big man, who turned upon him a face seamed and mahoganized from his outdoor work.

"Did I want you?" he roared. "Who said I wanted you?"

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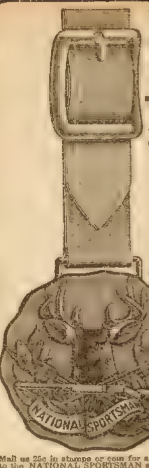

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"That fellow over there," panted Bert.

A grin spread over the big man's face and the workmen around him lifted their faces from the canvas which was spread on the ground and smiled expectantly.

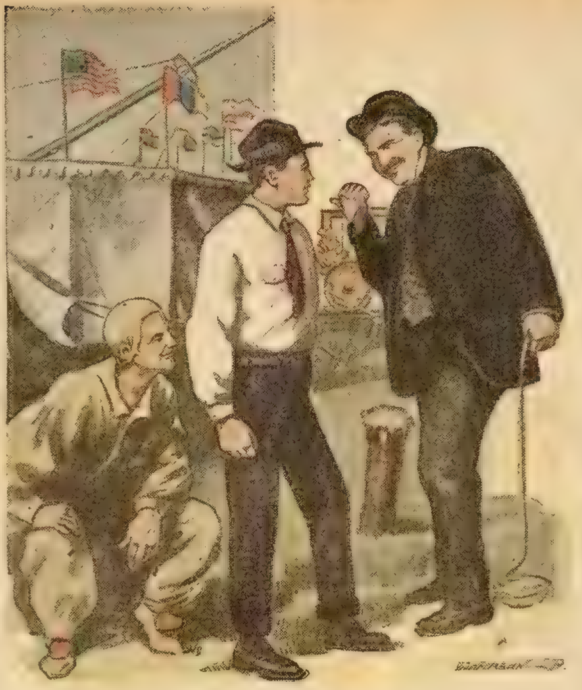
"Sure I wanted you," he went on. "You see I'm up against it. I want to put up this top here, and we've come down to the lot without the key to the center pole. Course we can't do nothing without the key the the center pole, can we?"

"Nope, I reckon not," Bert admitted.

"Well, you beat it down to the train and tell the trainmaster to get it and to send it by you, see? When you get back maybe we'll give you a pass to the show."

The old trainmaster's pale-blue eyes lighted when Bert delivered the message, and he chuckled to himself. "Ain't them kids the limit?" he said. "They'd forgit their heads and leave 'em in the lion's mouth if they did a animal ack. They would, for a fack. How'd they 'speck to put up the big top 'thout the key to the center pole, hey?" He fumbled through his pockets with a worried air. "Lordy, now, what d'you think o' that? I put that key in the elephant's trunk and I forgot to get it out. Say, kid, you run right back there and tell Harry he'll find the key in the elephant's trunk, and the key to the elephant's trunk in the calliope vault. Hustle up, now, sonny, cause Harry'll be gitten' mad if you ain't back there in a hurry." The old man went away chuckling to himself, and turned every now and then to watch the eager boy rushing away on his important mission.

When Bert got back to the circus lot the center pole was up in the air and guyed down by ropes running out from all sides of it. The huge top was stretched out on the ground around the poles, and from the sounds coming from the cook-tent Bert knew that there was a temporary lull in operations until the circus men finished their breakfast. He looked around for the canvas man who had sent him to the train, but he was nowhere in sight. Instead, as he turned a corner of the cook-tent, he came upon a young girl who was seated on a blue box watching a boy turn backward somersaults.



"Can't do nothing without the key to the center-pole, can we?"

She was counting audibly each time the boy whirled in the air and his feet slapped the ground. Six—seven—eight—nine. "There, that's enough. You're not spotting them anyhow, and what's the use of doing it if you don't do it right?"

"Why wasn't I spottin' 'em?" demanded the boy, who appeared to Bert to be about twelve years old. "Here, gimme your handkerchief and I'll show you."

He grabbed her handkerchief from her lap and laid it on the ground. "Watch me!" He began to whirl over and over and each time his feet landed squarely in the center of the cloth. "Nine—ten—eleven—twelve!" he shouted. He stopped and turned to the woman. "That's spottin' 'em, ain't it? An' that's two more than I did yestiddy, besides the others, ain't it?"

He sat down on the ground panting, and the woman patted him on the head. "That's the stuff," she said. "You'll be a real performer one of these days, won't you?"

"You bet I will," agreed the child. "I can do more now than Jimmy Canby, an' he does 'em in the concert for money."

"I can do that," Bert said, and without waiting for an invitation he stepped on the handkerchief and began to whirl over and over backward as the child had done. His feet flashed more and more rapidly in the air and the handkerchief became rolled into a narrow white strip. Each time he turned his feet struck it exactly in the center. The woman looked on with admiration shining from her eyes. On his last whirl Bert sprang high into the air, and turned a clear somersault, then poising for an instant he whirled forward without touching his hands to the ground and landed again on the handkerchief.

"Gee," said the little fellow in open-mouthed admiration. "When'd you join? You'll make the other fellows on this show sick with them kind of stunts."

"I don't belong to the circus. I been practicin' those whirls till I got to be pretty good at 'em, I reckon, but I didn't know I could beat the circus fellows."

The big man who had sent Bert for the center pole key stepped out from the cook-tent where he had been watching Bert under the side wall. He stretched out his hand and grasped Bert's. "Say, kid, I apologize for kidding you about that key. If I'd known you could turn 'em like that I wouldn't a done it. I got to hand it to you. You ought to join this show. The old man would be glad to get you 'cause he's short on tumblers. You're wastin' your talents in this yap burg."

"Join the show!"

Bert's face flamed scarlet. There was no place in his singing brain for resentment against the trick the circus men had played on him. He heard only that he could join the circus to do the things that gave him most pleasure in life. There came over him the call of the circus rings, the sound of the band, the applause of the audience, and the flash of glittering tights in contrast to the sordid drudgery of the daily chores about his home, the constant nagging of his father and the criticism of the church people. His great chance to get away from these hateful things had come. He would do it. He would go at once to the manager and ask for a job. He would end it all now. He had known for a long time that he would have to do it sooner or later. Then there rose before him his mother's face, framed in its gray curls, with her sad eyes and the deep love that always shone in them for him. A lump arose in his throat. He looked up at the bellying canvas of the big top as it rose on the poles, then turned to the dusty road that led to his little home. In fancy he saw his mother bending over the stove, preparing his breakfast, perhaps thinking of his love for the circus, and trying to plan some way to gain his father's consent to let him go. He was torn with the two emotions, and his mother won. He turned to the man and the woman who were watching him curiously.

"Gee, I'd like to go, but I reckon there ain't no chance for me." Slowly, almost hoping they would call him back, he went away.

CHAPTER III.

BERT had seen the parade with its bands, clucking animal wagons, white and brown horses, elephants on which sat brown men with funny turbans on their heads and little spikes in their hands with which they occasionally prodded their lumbering beasts and the swaying camels, lifting their heads in jerks as if they wanted to run away on their splay feet back to the sands from which they came. Among a crowd of young men and women, gaily dressed and riding prancing horses, he discovered his friend who had watched the little boy do "backs" that morning on the circus lot. She was a wonderful creature now, with her brown hair hanging in two plaits down her back and sitting sideways on her horse so that her velvet riding habit could fly in the wind. She saw Bert and nodded pleasantly to him, turning to point him out to the little boy who rode near her, and the little boy started telling the others something so that they all turned and looked back at him over their shoulders.

He had gone home, his brain awhirl with excitement, determined to ask his father to let him go to see the show, but his father, sitting cold and erect at the head of the table, prayed longer than usual before their meal, and included a plea that he and his family might be delivered from the evils of worldly dissipation as embodied in the devil-begotten, sin-ridden circus.

After that, Bert ate his dinner in silence, not daring to broach the request that filled his being, until unable longer to hold his sorrow, he rushed away to the barn and flung himself in despair on his straw mattress and cried as he had cried when, a tiny boy, he had been forbidden to follow his natural inclinations.

After a while the storm of grief passed and a determination not to be denied all the pleasure that life was offering him took its place. It was late in the afternoon now, long after the performance had started, but Bert went down again to the show lot. As he hung around the entrance to the sideshow, looking at the banners, he felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to find his friend, the boss canvas man, laughing down at him.

"What's the matter, sonny? Why ain't you in to see the show?"

Bert had to conquer the tears that filled his eyes before he replied. In a rush of passionate words he told his sorrows.

"Minister, hey? Well, now what do you think of that? That's too bad." The boss thought a moment. "I'll tell you what we'll do," he blurted out finally, "you stay down here to supper with me and then go to the show anyhow. I used to be a kid myself and I used to slip in the house after they had all gone to sleep and nobody was the wiser."

Hope sprung again in Bert's bosom. "D-do you mean for me to take supper here—in the tent with you?"

"Sure."

"Gee!" Bert exclaimed, as the idea overwhelmed him. "I'll do it if I get a lickin' for it."

That supper in the cook-house was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to Bert. He found himself seated at a long table surrounded by rough men, all eating as if their existence depended on their putting away their food in the smallest possible space of time. Near by in front of him was a long table covered with a white cloth, at which were seated some of the officials of the show and their wives. At another table he saw strange people, a giant who leaned over and ate with huge gulps; a midget, sitting in a high chair next to a woman who cut up the food for the little one into tiny bits no larger than the end of a pencil. A bearded woman sat next to a skeleton man and flirted with him between mouthfuls. Bert recognized them all from the banners in front of the sideshow.

After supper he mingled with the crowd in the small tent and saw those people closer than he had at supper. It appeared strange to him that they talked to each other like ordinary people. He found the girl and the little boy he had met that morning. They were seated on a platform and smiled down at Bert. When the crowd, preceded by the lecturer, came to them, the girl hypnotized the boy, laid him on a couch and spread her hands above him, and the boy arose in the air without any support, apparently, and remained there while she passed hoops over him and finally, with other passes, let him down to the couch.

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As Bert started away the girl called him and gave him a photograph of herself. On the back of it she wrote, "To the best spotter I ever saw," and signed it "Mary Dennis."

"Is that your name?" asked Bert.

"That's my real name," she replied. "My circus name is Mary Valerno. My brother and myself are The Two Valernos. We do a double trapeze act and Roman rings. You'll see us in the big show in the center ring."

With that she gathered her skirts up to her knees, jumped down from her platform, ducked under the sidewall of the tent and was gone. Bert looked again at the picture she had given him.

"Gee," he muttered, "she's a pretty girl. I'll bet she's a great performer."

He went out and found his friend the canvas man who obtained a seat for him in the reserved section, directly in front of the center ring, and his heart beating like a trip-hammer, Bert heard the whistle blow the signal for the band to start and saw the long line of animals, horses, chariots and cages swing out from the entry-way and begin the march around the hippodrome track which opened the show. In the joy of the moment all thought of his father was wiped out of his mind.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Bert went out of the tent at the end of the performance, the circus lot was buzzing with the activity which accompanies the moving show. Flaring torches were placed at points about the grounds; huge wagons went lumbering off into the night. The menagerie and sideshow tents were down and packed into their wagons. He heard a familiar voice roaring orders and saw his friend the boss canvas man hurrying toward him.

"So long, pal," Connor said as he grasped Bert's hand in his huge paw. "Hope you don't get into trouble with the old man. If you do, come on back and I'll see if I can't get you a job with the show."

He was gone and Bert started homeward. The enormity of his offense as his father would see it now came over him. He wished, in a way, that he had obeyed his father, then he remembered that he was almost a man and had a man's right to follow his own inclinations. Downcast by his thoughts, he came to his little home. The moon was shining brightly through the trees as he let himself through the gate and turned to fasten it behind him. Slowly he walked to the low porch that ran across the front of the house. Standing there in the moonlight, his hand grasping a buggy whip, like some outraged embodiment of righteousness, stood his father.

"My son," the minister's voice boomed through the stillness, "where have you been?"

Bert scorned a lie. He realized that to his father he had committed a grievous error, but he determined to stand up for his rights. In a clear voice he replied, "To the circus."

His father glared at him. Outraged paternal authority sat upon the old man and condemned Bert through his snapping eyes.

"Contrary to my positive orders?"

"Yes, sir," said Bert.

The silence again fell between them. Bert was breathing hard and the old man's lips were moving, maybe in prayer, possibly in an angry effort to speak. He found his voice. "Come here!" he roared, in the tone that Bert had learned to fear.

Bert instinctively moved back and his father stepped from the porch and advanced toward him. The whip he carried in his hand cut through the air with a swishing sound, as if it gloated in the work it was to do. At the sound Bert's fighting blood was aroused.

His head was back and his hands clenched at his side, his nostrils wide and quivering. "Father, I didn't want to disobey you. But I can see no wrong in it. I've wanted all my life to live as the other boys here live. They enjoy their lives. But you've never let me. Am I to be deprived of all pleasures because I happen to be a minister's son?"

Without a word the old man strode to him and grasped him by the collar. The action stung Bert to the quick. With a wrench he tore himself loose, and flung off the old man's hand.

"You ain't going to touch me with that."

The old man raised his arm. His face, in the light that came through the trees, was set and white. Again Bert stepped back.

"You ain't going to beat me again," he said sullenly. "I'm too big to be beaten. I ain't a kid any longer, I'm almost a man."

For answer the whip cut through the air and landed across his shoulders. The boy hardly felt it from the sudden surging of resentment that went over him. With a spring he grasped the old man's wrist, wrested the whip from him and threw it aside.

"You shan't do it," he cried, "you shan't beat me."

The father stood aghast at the son's deed. He stared at the excited boy with unbelieving eyes, and Bert returned his glare, the pent up feeling of years of mistreatment flooding from him, making the old man quail before him. The father's eyes dropped before his son's, and for a moment he hung his head, his long, white beard quivering with feeling, and his hands shaking as they clenched and unclenched at his side.

Over Bert, calming rapidly now that he spoken his determination, came a feeling that he had gone too far. After all, he thought, his father was doing as he deemed right. In his father's code, Bert knew, there was no middle course. Absolute obedience of the child to the parent stood first. To him the commandment's decree to obey the father and mother meant obedience to the last degree.

With a little cry of repentance, Bert started forward, his arms outstretched.

"Father!"

But the old man held up his hand and waved him away. "My son," his voice was quavering, as if suddenly added years had weakened it, "you have hurt me deeply. You have disobeyed and scorned me, and that means that you are no longer my son."

He stood in silence for a moment, and then suddenly straightened. His gnarled hand pointed down the path that led to the gate. "You will go away, and you will remember this night. In my heart you will always be dear to me, but perhaps it would be better that we are parted. When you have made something out of yourself that you are proud of, you will return to us and we will welcome you. Remember always that your father and mother are praying that God will watch over you and care for you."

He turned and stalked into the house and closed the door behind him. Bert watched him in silence, then walked slowly down the path to the gate. He stopped once in the road and looked back, and with a little sob turned and ran down the road toward the circus lot.

This remarkable story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

Not His Funeral.

The fare at a certain boarding-house was very poor. A boarder who had been there for some time, because he could not get away, was standing in the hall when the landlord rang the dinner bell. Whereupon an old dog that was lying outside on a rug commenced to howl mournfully.

The boarder watched him a little while, and then said:

"What on earth are you howling for? You don't have to eat it!"

SENSIBLE GIRL

"That little girl next door is certainly mighty sensible," remarked Standish, settling himself beside his wife in the porch swing.

"Indeed?" replied Mrs. Standish. "Has she been making eyes at you?"

"I am free to admit," replied Standish, "that that would be a proof of intelligence, but not a proof of unusual intelligence. Everybody does that, you know. If you hadn't made eyes at me in days gone by, I presume I should still be hopping from twig to twig as light heartedly and as carefree as a johnny-jumpup."

"Your metaphors are somewhat mixed," replied his wife, "but I think I get your meaning. Let me tell you that if I had not made eyes at you, I am sure you would still be as untidy in your appearance, with your tie as crooked and your boots as unshined and your hands and feet as awkward as they used to be; and, besides, I didn't make eyes at you, and you know it. You didn't give me any peace in my life; you hunted me from pillar to post; pursued me till I was out of breath, and then, while I was still out of breath and could not answer you, you asked me to marry you, and took silence for consent and married me before I recovered. I married you because I was sorry for you, and because none of the other girls would look at you, and because you needed some one to look after you, and, if I had my life to live over again, I would marry you again!"

"Help! There seems to be no escape!"

"If you go to making eyes at the little girl next door," said Mrs. Standish, "and coming to tell me how sensible she is, you'll have to show a reason for your interest, or I'll put a spider in your coffee. Confess!"

"All right, here's where I make a clean breast of the whole affair. I have been watching her for a long time. She takes the same car to town every morning that I take, and she knows two men who take the same car. One of these is an Apollo. If the seats are all occupied he is happy. He takes his place in the aisle between the two rear seats, reaches a hand up on either side and gets hold of a strap. Hanging that way, every one who enters the car is compelled to scrouge past him, and so notice what a beautiful creature he is. When he is so unfortunate as to be able to find a seat he sits in the end nearest the aisle, crosses his knees carelessly so that one foot projects into the aisle, where everybody will fall over it, and so take notice of him, and he sits sidewise so that his beautiful cameo-like profile is turned to all the rest of the car, and preserves that position all the way to town. The other man she knows is a small insignificant shrimp with pale hair."

"Are you describing yourself?"

"No, I would not flatter myself that way. If I were describing myself I would be the Apollo and let the other fellow be the shrimp. I am merely an onlooker. The shrimp person effaces himself as nearly as possible. If the car is crowded to the platform he remains in a corner of the platform where he will not be noticed. If all the seats are occupied, he goes up to the front of the car, where no one will fall over him.

"The shrimp and the Apollo for many months have cast kind glances in the direction of the shrinking little blossom next door, and I say she is a sensible girl because this morning she found an empty seat beside the little shrimp of a man, and I caught them both looking at a beautiful diamond ring upon the third finger of her left hand. Also I saw them surreptitiously holding hands for a moment. Also the Apollo person forgot to stick his foot in the aisle this morning, and did not care whether his perfect profile was turned toward the world or not. That little girl had a chance to choose between real worth and an imitation, and she has chosen as you did."

"Thank you. That puts me into the sensible class. But perhaps she chose as I did for the reason I did. The good-looking fellow didn't mean business and the shrimp proposed. She took what she could get."

"Well, wasn't that sensible?"

"I think it was, and I hope she may think so when she has been married as long as we have. You little shrimps aren't much to look at, but you make pretty good running mates when you get wives who have sense enough not to spoil you."

"Well, no one will ever accuse you of having spoiled your husband. I was going to buy you a new dress, but now I am going to compromise on a five-cent picture show."

"That will be perfectly all right. I can get the new dress myself. I get all your salary, anyhow."

* * *

A Narrow Range.

Sylvia, supple and slender, and Aunt Belle, bulky and benign, had returned from a shopping tour. Each had been trying to buy a ready-made suit.

When they returned home, Sylvia was asked what success each had in her efforts to be fitted.

"Well," said Sylvia, "I got along pretty well, but Aunt Belle is getting so fat that about all she can get, ready-made, is an umbrella."

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THE FAIRY CORNER

IN THE MOON.

What do you see in the moon, little one,
Up in the sky so high?
Dou you see a man with a twinkle of fun
Shining bright from his silvery eye?

What do you see in the moon, my child,
Keeping watch over all the earth?
Do you see a rabbit, a rabbit wild,
That excites your childish mirth?

Do you see in the moon as it hangs on high
A mysterious lady fair,
Who combs and combs, without a sigh,
Her wonderful golden hair?

Now look at the moon again, my dear,
When it's round and clear and gold,
And you'll see a mother bend over her babe
And its little form enfold.

◆

Just Like a Woman.

Mrs. Snow is like the poet who "felt two natures striving within" him. Her soul is as courageous as that of any soldier, but her nerves are pure womanly. She longs to do brave deeds, athletic and otherwise, but her feminine weakness rebels.

Last winter, for example, Mrs. Snow decided to learn to swim. She sought out a natatorium, held a long conversation with the sympathetic and encouraging instructor, and informed her delighted but not too confident husband that she expected soon to become a crack swimmer. From time to time she reported the acquisition of various "strokes," but she said nothing about diving. One night Mr. Snow, with a quiet eye twinkle, interrupted a highly technical discourse to ask, gently:

"Maisie, have you ever been out in deep water yet?"

Mrs. Snow, taken off her guard, colored and hesitated.

"Well, not in really deep water," she admitted at last, "although I'm going to soon; the instructor says I've got to or stop taking lessons. But—well, I've been out higher than my waist."

Mr. Snow, who loves his wife tenderly and knows her like a book, placed a kind hand under her chin and compelled her to look directly at him.

"Maisie," he said again, "I know just the situation you're in, and I want to help, honey. You're like a horse that's longing to leap a fence but doesn't dare to, and you'll never be a good swimmer until you've made yourself swim in deep water. Now, the day you can tell me that you've plunged off into the deep end of the pool and swum out without assistance I'll—I'll give you that pearl pendant you've wanted so long."

"Oh, John!" cried Mrs. Snow, her eyes shining with mingled love and anticipation, "you are the kindest man I ever heard of. And I'll learn to dive now, even if I die of fright, just to please you. You'll see how soon I'll earn that pendant."

Some weeks passed before Mr. Snow inquired as to her progress in diving. Mrs. Snow had to admit that she was still timid. She had dived, yes, but she had come up scared and had "taken the pole," although the instructor had insisted that she didn't need it. She was ashamed of being such a coward. Tomorrow—yes, tomorrow, she'd dive off the springboard or die!

Tomorrow night, however, Mr. Snow knew by sundry signs that again she had been vanquished. Gently he pressed home the definite question. Mrs. Snow, brought to bay, faced him with indignant blushes.

"No, I didn't dive off the springboard, if you must know!" she confessed stormily. "I was simply scared to. But—I wasn't quite beaten, John, I wasn't really. I—I well, you know the toboggan sends you off into four feet of water, and, John, I—I—thought of you and I risked it. I climbed up to that toboggan, John, like a hero, and I shut my eyes and just slid in!"

◆

Smith's Plan.

Once Sydney Smith, author of "Memoirs of Half a Century," was a guest at a dinner given by an archdeacon. A fellow guest with a passion for natural history was a decided bore if allowed to dwell upon his hobby. At the solicitation of his host, Smith promised to keep the naturalist from monopolizing the conversation. As soon as they were seated about the festive board the naturalist perceived his chance to be at hand. Turning to the archdeacon, he said:

"Have you seen the pamphlet written by my coworker, Professor Dickenson, upon the extraordinary size of the eye of a common house fly, my dear deacon?"

"Why, no," replied the deacon, politely. "I can't say that I have."

"I recommend it to your attention then, with all my heart," smiled the bore, pressing his advantage. "It is a most remarkable pamphlet, setting forth clearly full particulars as to the abnormal size of a fly's eye."

"I must take exception to that statement," said Smith's voice from the other end of the table.

"You mean," cried the bore, in arms in an instant, "to call into question the research and observation of my most learned friend? May I ask upon what authority you take such a stand?"

"Upon very well-known authority," replied Smith, easily, but with a wicked twinkle in his eye. "Based, in fact, on evidence wedded to an immortal verse known to every scholarly gentleman at this table.

"Will you, sir, have the kindness to quote your authority?" queried the naturalist, with great heat.

"With great pleasure, sir. The evidence is in those well-known, nay, immortal lines:

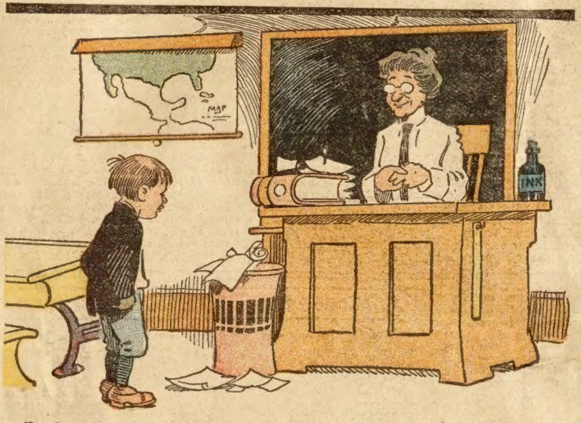
"'Who saw him die?'
'I,' said the fly;
'With my little eye.'"

The merriment which ensued completely silenced the bore and the dinner drew to a delightful conclusion without further mention of natural history.

◆

Musical Monkeys.

A learned professor has been studying the effect of music upon the animals at the Paris zoo. He found the monkeys quite partial to ragtime, especially if it is played on violin or flute, and they stopped eating or scratching or jumping about to listen. Elephants and rhinoceroses took no notice of either ragtime or better things, but the hippopotamus put his head out of the water and listened as if he were enjoying it, a waltz by a famous composer—Offenbach.



Teacher—"If you had an apple and you gave Bobby Jones one-fifth of two-thirds of it, what part of the apple would he get?"
Scholar—The rotten part!"

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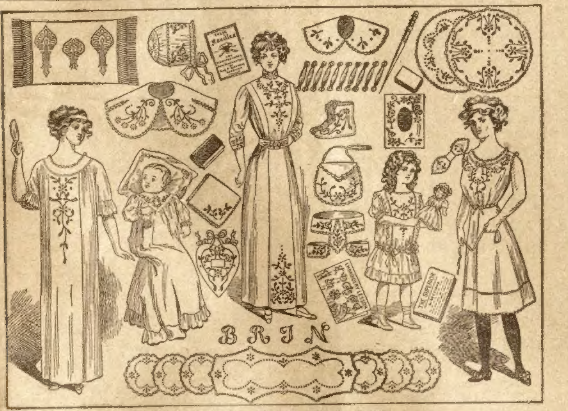

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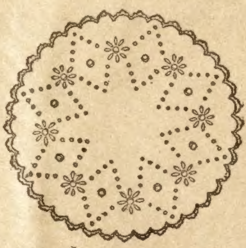
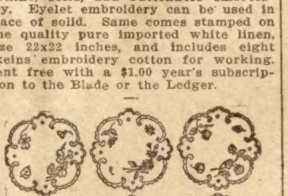
NO. 13 P. B., FANCY WORK OUTFIT.—This beautiful outfit is certainly the biggest and best bargain ever offered to those interested in embroidery. It contains: One large tray, size 8x17, and six doilies to match, size 5½x5½, all stamped on real Irish white linen; one oblong pillow top, size 17x21, hand-tinted on ecru art cloth; one bone stiletto for punching holes for eyelet embroidery; ten skeins of white embroidery cotton; one package of ten embroidery needles; three large sheets of perforated patterns, containing designs for linen suits, corset covers, centerpieces, baby kimono, baby dress, calendars, picture frames, handkerchiefs, collar and cuffs, etc., and one complete alphabet; also a cake of superior stamping preparation, with full and explicit directions. Given free with a $2.00 year's subscription to the Blade and the Ledger.



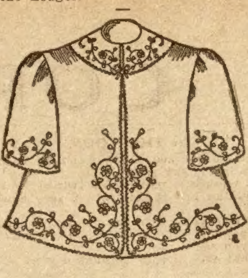
No. 170, Centerpiece.

NO. 170, CENTERPIECE.—This neat centerpiece design is to be worked in outline, solid, and buttonhole embroidery. Eyelet embroidery can be used in place of solid. Same comes stamped on fine quality pure imported white linen, size 22x22 inches, and includes eight skeins embroidery cotton for working. Sent free with a $1.00 year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.



No. 171, Set of Six Doilies.

NO. 171, SET OF SIX DOILIES.—This set of six doilies is to be worked in outline and buttonhole embroidery for the edge. The set is stamped on fine quality pure imported white linen, including eight skeins embroidery cotton for working. Complete set given free with a $1.00 year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.



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NO. 172, BABY KIMONO.—This attractive baby kimono design is to be worked on outline embroidery and is stamped on cotton flannel, including six skeins cotton for working. Given free with a $1.00 year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.

* * *

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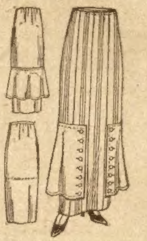
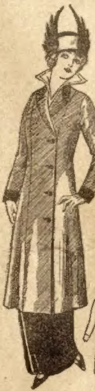
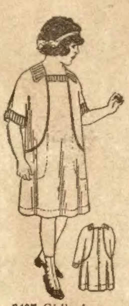


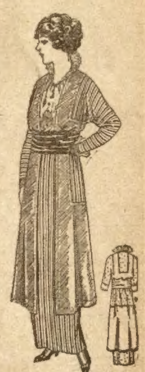
8421 Two-Piece Skirt with Flounce, 24 to 34 waist.



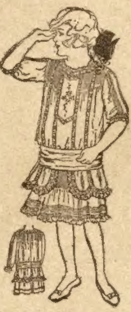
8413 Three-Quarter Coat, 34 to 44 bust.



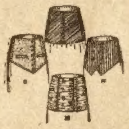
8437 Girl's Apron. 8 to 12 years.



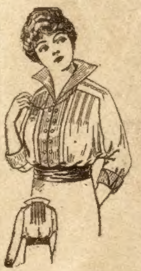
8424 Gown with Circular Tunic, 34 to 42 bust.



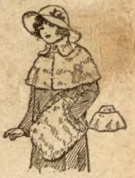
8422 Girl's Dress, 8 to 12 years.



8425A Set of Skirt Yokes, 24 to 34 waist.



8420 Tucked Blouse, 34 to 42 bust.



8431 Girl's Cape and Muff, 8 to 12 years.

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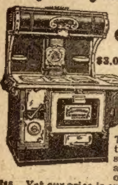

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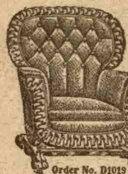

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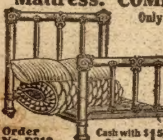

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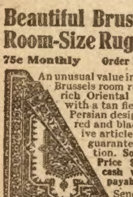

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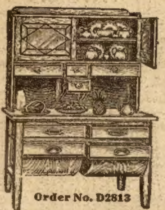

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Never before has such a kitchen cabinet been offered at a price as low as what we quote on this one. The base top measures 25 x 42 inches. Made with two large sliding bins, two cutlery drawers and a large kneading board. The top has a large double china compartment fitted with art glass doors and four roomy spice drawers. Construction throughout of select golden oak with high gloss finish. **Sold on 30 days' trial. Price $8.95. Terms, $1.50 cash with order, balance payable 75c monthly.**

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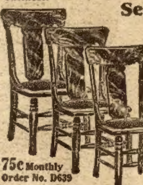

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A remarkable new dining chair with high plain panel back, continuous back posts and neat, turned front posts and spindles. Genuine golden oak, gloss finish. The construction throughout is first-class in every respect. Seats are heavily upholstered and covered with chase leather, one of the best imitations of genuine leather used for upholstering. You may buy one or set of six.

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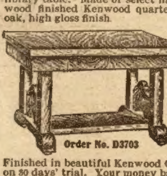
Only 65c Monthly



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This table has been especially designed for our trade and we are introducing it at an extremely low price. It is made with a large roomy drawer and the top measures 28 x 42 in. Finished in beautiful Kenwood Quartered Oak. Shipped on 30 days' trial. Your money back if not satisfied. Try it 30 days. **Price $7.35. Terms, $1.00 cash with order, balance payable 65c monthly. Order direct from this page.**

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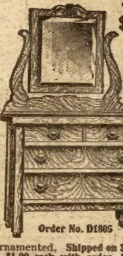

Order No. D1805

To introduce this neat, new dresser we are quoting a remarkably low price. It is made of hardwood beautifully finished in Kenwood quartered oak and highly glossed. Has very large roomy drawers with wood knobs. The top measures 21 x 38 in. and the French beveled plate mirror measures 16 x 20 in. The standards are gracefully curved and the mirror frame neatly ornamented. **Shipped on 30 days' trial. Price $7.35. Terms, $1.00 cash with order, balance payable 65c monthly. Order direct from this page.**

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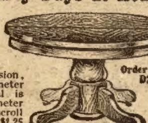

Order No. D2359

An entirely new high-grade extension table, made of select genuine oak finished with a rich golden gloss finish. Top is made with 6 foot extension, measures 42 in. in diameter when closed. Pedestal is heavy stock 8 in. in diameter and made with colonial scroll feet. **Price $8.65. Terms, $1.25 cash with order. Balance, 75c monthly. Shipped on 30 days' trial.**

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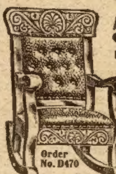

Order No. D470

A new high-grade parlor rocker, graceful design, hardwood frame, embossed front and top panels. May be had in either genuine golden oak or mahoganized birch finish. The covering is a high grade Spanish leatherette made with a deep spring seat and neatly tufted back. Sold under our guarantee. **Shipped on 30 days' trial. Price $5.65. Terms, 75c cash with order. Balance 50c monthly.** It is

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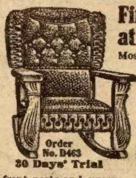

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30 Days' Trial

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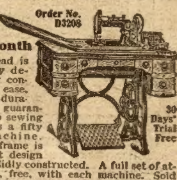
$1 a Month



Order No. D3208

30 Days' Trial Free

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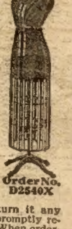
ADJUSTABLE Dress Form

75c Monthly



Order No. D2540X

Spear's Latest "Crown" Adjustable Dress Form is a wonder. Makes dressmaking easy and a pleasure. Helps you to dress in up-to-date fashion at small cost. Eliminates the discomfort of being fitted. Quickly solves every difficulty and does away with guesswork, disappointment, and saves expense and waste of valuable material.

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